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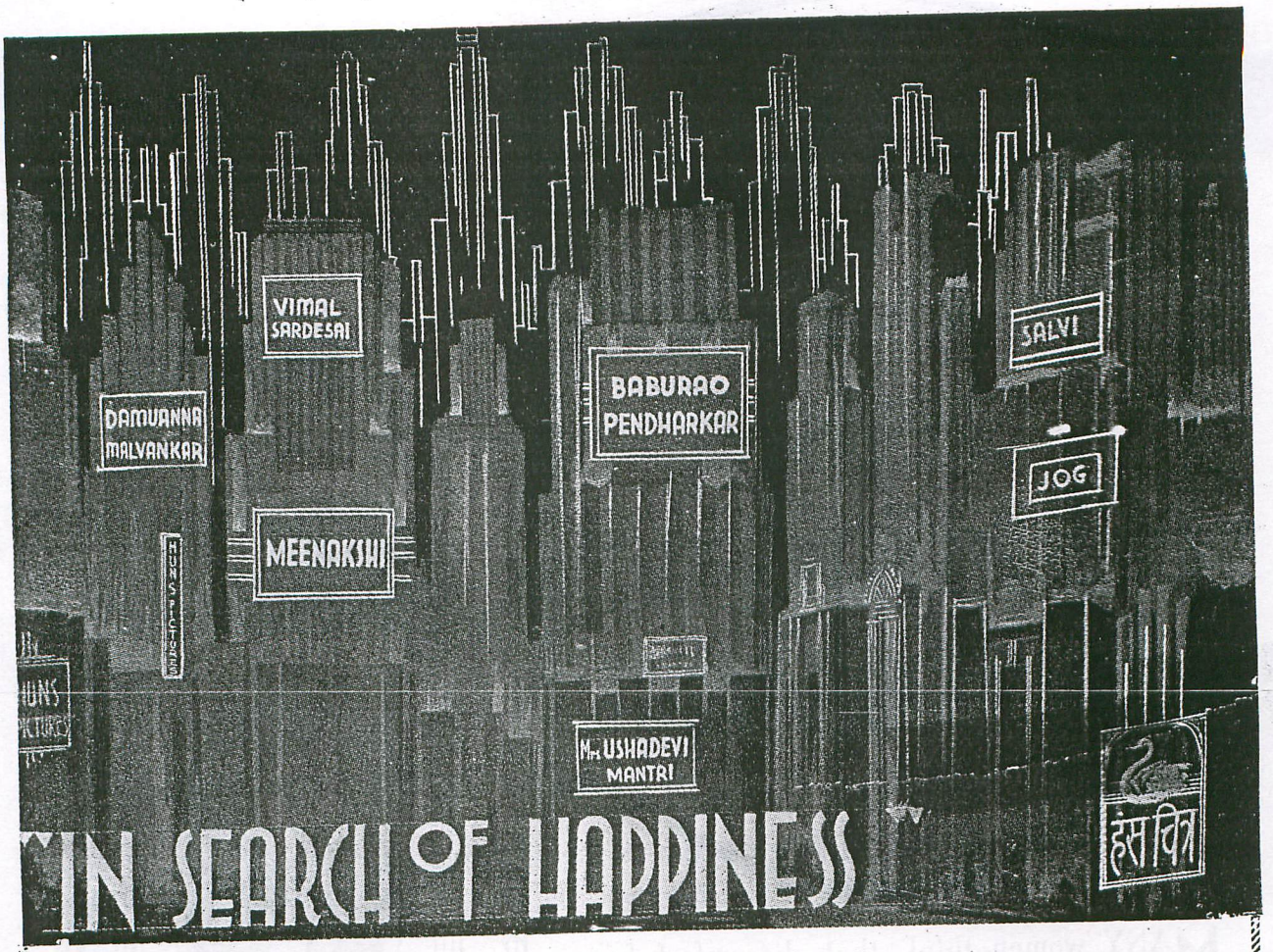

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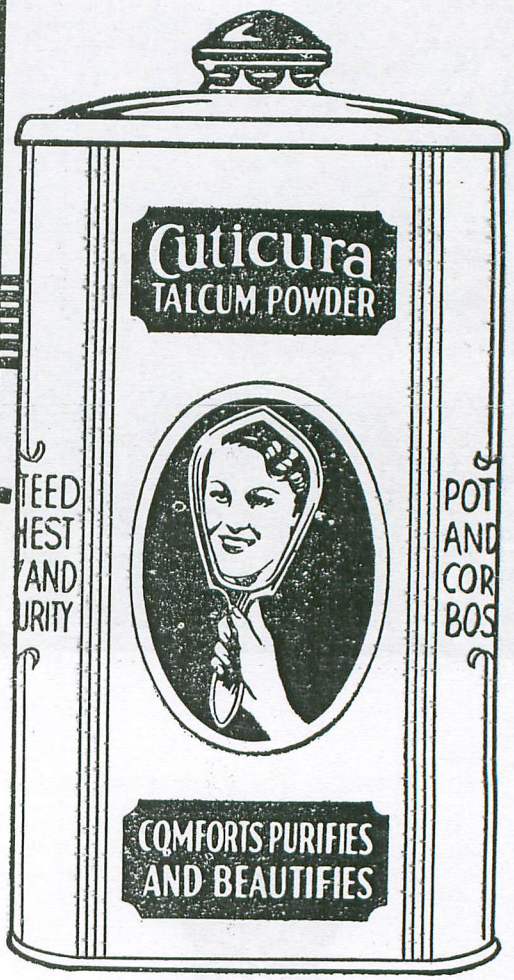

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GIRL ON THE COVER

Baby Saroja

Mr. Baburao Patel, Editor of "filmindia", writing from Berlin in his latest letter, sends his greetings to all his readers.

filmindia

Proprietors: Filmindia Publications Ltd., 104, Apollo Street, Fort, Bombay

Editor: BABURAO PATEL

Vol. 5 AUGUST 1939 No. 8

Suicide or Blackmail

Once upon a time there was a man who cut down the branch of the tree on which he was sitting and, in strict conformity with the laws of gravitation, came down with a crash. They still remember him as a prize fool.

What should we call film producers, distributors and exhibitors who take the equally rash and suicidal step of arbitrarily cutting out advertisements in the popular press and trade journals?

Not even the most self-complacent producer would be able to say that the present progress of of the Indian film industry has not been, in a large measure, due to the consistent propaganda and publicity done by the film magazines and weeklies as well as the great national press of the country.

Not only have these papers lent editorial support to the legitimate economic interests of the industry by pressing for a more advantageous scale of tariffs and duties but (what is far more important) they have, by the constant interest (not always intelligent or disinterested, let it be conceded) taken by them in various topics connected with the films, whipped up interest in Indian films among the vast bulk of educated public in India.

Those who doubt this statement ought to remember that ten years ago very few cultured and educated Indians regularly saw Indian productions. At that time they suffered from an incurable prejudice against the amateurish and technically mediocre efforts of the Indian Studios. If this prejudice has been battered down today to the extent that the educated classes have not merely started frequenting Indian cinemas but have even allowed their sons and daughters to adopt the screen as a profession and raise the cultural standard of this industry, the credit goes entirely to the Press.

Dozens of daily papers devote one or two or three pages every week to the dissemination of information (mostly of the uncritical and flattering variety) pertaining to Indian films. Then there are hundreds of film monthlies, fortnightlies and weeklies which are exclusively devoted to this industry. One need not go into their individual merits or demerits—some of them are pretty disgraceful—but among them they have a reading public of millions who are thus being persuaded to see (and pay for) Indian films.

Any move (such as envisaged by a resolution of the Northern India Distributors) to belittle or ignore this trade press can only be characterised as suicidal. As modern businessmen, showmen, Indian producers and distributors ought to realize that they cannot afford to lose the support of direct and indirect advertisements in the trade press.

It is possible that Northern India distributors have arrived at this unfortunate decision by the unscrupulous methods of certain journals who resort to all kinds of tricks to secure advertisements. But is it wise to penalize all for the sins of a few or, to vary the metaphor, to cut down the head to cure a headache. No producer or distributor is under compulsion to advertise in every journal—why not each of them discriminate between **influential** and **responsible** publications and the gutter rags which are a slur on the name of film journalism? The public is the best judge and only decent publications enjoy large and increasing circulation. Let that be the criterion.

But it has often been observed that these very obnoxious class of journals thrive on the support of certain producers who are flattered, cajoled or threatened into giving advertisements. This problem would not arise at all if producers were a little less susceptible to flattery and possessed a little more business acumen to be able to distinguish between good and bad advertising media.

At the Motion Picture Congress and after we heard much about journalists who blackmail producers. It is possible that there are such black-sheep. The time has now come to expose producers who blackmail journalists. Here are a few concrete instances.

A leading Indian producer approached the editor of a prominent nationalist daily with the demand that the Film Critic should be dismissed **—because he had written a critical review of a picture.**

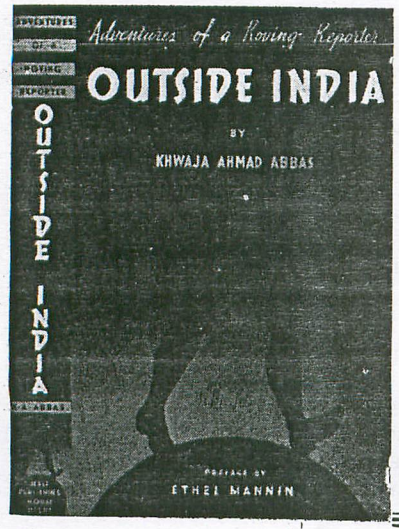
The same producers moved heaven and earth to get the Film Critic of another daily paper dismissed for similar reasons. The review of their picture did not come up to their expectations "We will stop the advertisement" was repeatedly used as an argument.

Another leading producer made repeated complaints against the film critic of a nationalist paper and then stopped advertisement because the critic had dared to say that a certain film was based on a story plagiarized from a foreign film.

Repeated efforts have been made by certain local producers to get this magazine banned by their Association. In many cases critical reviews of pictures have been followed by the intimation "We have stopped your advertisement."

The producers ought to realise that this blackmail will recoil upon themselves like a boomerang. As independent film criticism grows in the country, a day may come when they will have to ban every single paper in the country. It will be a bad day for the Indian film industry.

K. A. ABBAS *meets* PRITHVIRAJ *in Hollywood!*



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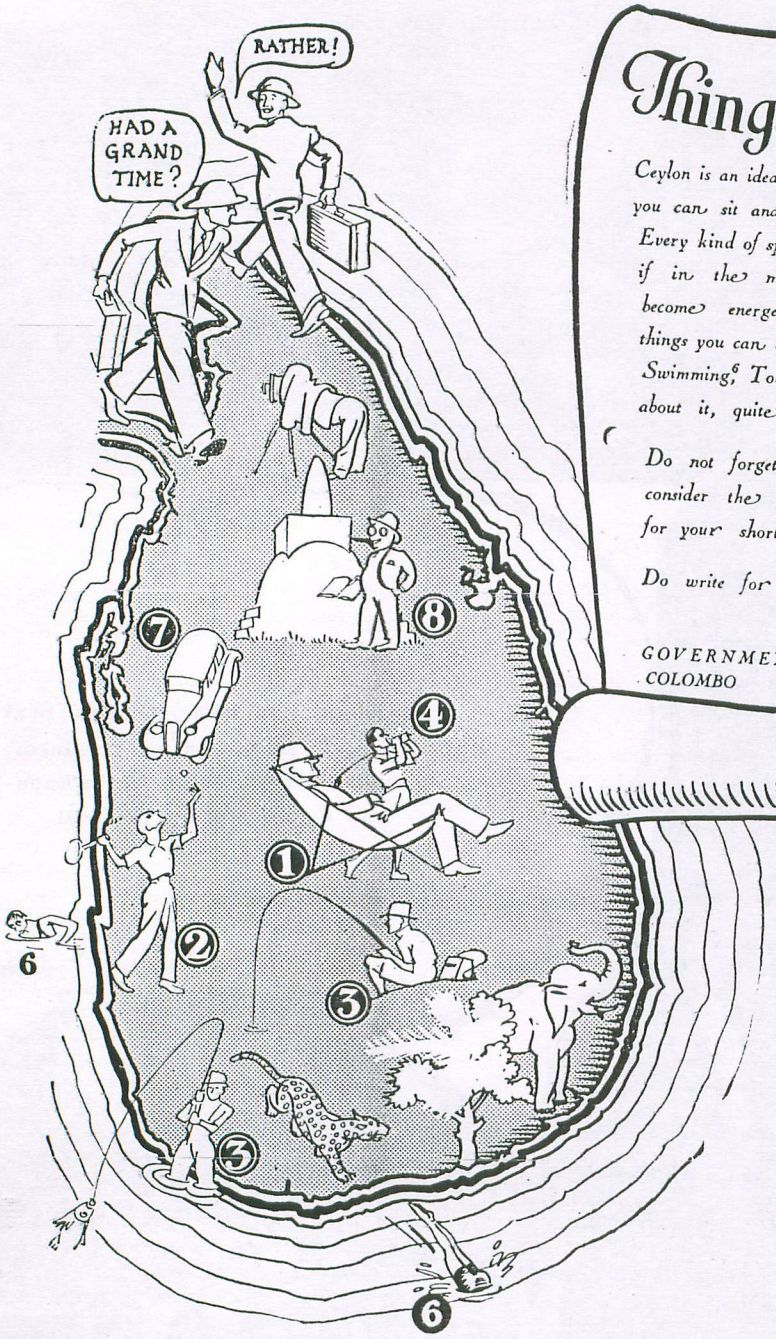

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I VISIT THE FILM CITY IN ROME

By Baburao Patel

In Italy the State does all the thinking and has complete control of film production.

ROME, July 7.

Everything in Italy is organized. The individual has hardly any right to think and to think aloud is well nigh impossible. So the State does all the thinking and no wonder that the film industry of the country receives its particular share of organized thinking seeing that the film is a very vital instrument of propaganda for the political and economic uplift of the nation.

E.N.I.T. is the department that controls the film industry of Italy, in addition to its complete control of several other cultural schemes. This department is controlled by the Minister of Public Culture. The man at the head at present is His Excellency Alfieri Dino and under him there is another Excellency Orazi, who is the Director General of Cinematography.

Both these gentlemen are very exclusive persons being guarded all the hours by a fearful looking batch of police who do not care whether one came from India or from Timbucktoo. They are soldiers, who have been turned into peace time police and they have never heard of India. They, however, know Abyssinia, which has now made the erstwhile King of Italy into an Emperor of Ethiopia and unless Italy has a war with India, the Italian soldiers at least will never know India.

I had come 4000 miles away from India and I had to see both the Excellencies, whether they liked it or not. Besides, I could not get a permit to visit the Italian studios unless one of the Excellencies condescended to oblige. I decided to try from the top.

Trying At The Top

I know the top is always difficult. And who worries about the only Indian in Rome during the week I was there? The office of the controlling minister of national culture is housed in a Bastille like place with a very grim atmosphere inside. Strangely enough it is on Via Veneto a fashionable locality of Rome. As soon as I entered the portals of this huge building, I was greeted with a Fascist salute which was so sudden that I was taken aback for a moment.

I did the same gesture but with a little difference. I lent to my arm the dignity of our age-old sages and my salute looked more like a blessing given to the uniformed little 'mussolini'. Being taller of the two, I had a little advantage which the other fellow didn't seem to relish.

And then came the sudden and inevitable outburst of the Italian language. It is a beautiful language to hear, but when the uniformed Italian speaks it, somehow it sounds stern and dictatorial. (I had heard the milder version from softer lips). I smiled, not knowing what he asked. That puzzled the fellow. After a moment the uniform fell off and the bloke smiled, as all Italians do, with or without reason, a broad all embracing smile which means "I don't care what the world thinks." Mussolini had stepped out from between us and I asked him whether he knew English. It was an unnecessary question, but I could not ask another. He came out with "No Engleesh".

I said, nevermind. Who expects an Italian to know English when he has a beautiful language of his own in which he can make love to any girl in any clime and at any time. By the way, the Italians are really great at this game. On board the "Conte Verde" an Italian ship, even the Italian waiter had his share with the lady passengers and one could see them spooning in odd corners. The Italians don't need encouragement in this art. They only need a woman.

To revert to the little 'mussolini' at the door of the national culture, I started explaining with gestures and punctuated these with the occasional mention of the name of Alfieri Dino. That made him suspicious. Later on, I discovered that I had missed one subtle point, which was that through sheer inadvertance, I had dropped that Excellency part of it.

The little 'mussolini' had thought that I had not cared to respect that high dignitary, which, in fact, was not the case. Right at that moment, I would have saluted even the sentry ten times with my Oriental blessing.

The Language—A Great Problem

I was speaking in English for which he didn't care and he was going on with his Italian for which I did care but I could not understand. The language of gestures went on for a full fifteen minutes —each desperate about the other. He was polite in not asking me to go away. Perhaps, my size and personality saved me there. I had seen others being treated the other way.

A taxi driver had been watching this little game from the pavement all the time. Like the slow-moving, pleasure-seeking race of his,

fortunately for me, he thought that it was time to interfere. He knew English well and with a broad smile he began asking me questions. I told him my woe and it took me another ten minutes to convince him. I had to begin from Apollo Street and end at Via Veneto and even show my pass-port to the taxi man. And then he translated my wants to the other partner of the Axis and our treaty was signed.

My card was taken to His Excellency Alfieri Dino and I was asked to wait in a waiting room with grey paint, straight-back chairs, massive doors and prison furniture. This was the waiting room in the temple of culture. I wonder what the prison cells must be like. An hour elapsed and nothing happened. I was pacing about the small room with impatience and cursing all the Italians in the world—even the good ones. And just then another 'mussolini' entered and said in Italian that "His Excellency would receive me" (that is what I thought, anyway). I smiled and followed him. A smile is the only negotiable instrument for a foreigner in this country. It needs no interpreter.

We passed several corridors—dark and silent and after a full five minutes parade—it was a parade as they don't walk in Italy—I was not taken to His Excellency Alfieri Dino but to another who spoke 'Engleesh'. And the other referred me to His Excellency Orazi who was the Director General of Cinematography.

When I insisted on saying that I wished to meet H. E. Alfieri I was told that His Excellency has nothing to do with the cinema ('Chinema' in Italian) and the way he said it I thought that His Excellency had not seen a picture since he had been born. That was the end of the first interview.

Interview No. 2

Excellency No. 2 Orazi is reported to be suffering from rheumatism, with the result that he nurses a billious temperament. Seeing a sick Italian is perhaps the most difficult job in the world. This Orazi would forget his rheumatism only for the original Mussolini. They say, he needs the job. Taking a visiting card to him therefore was out of the question. Even his own assistants don't see him for weeks. Their appearance evidently accentuates the suffering. And thus ended the second interview. And I had still to get the permit to see the studios in Italy.

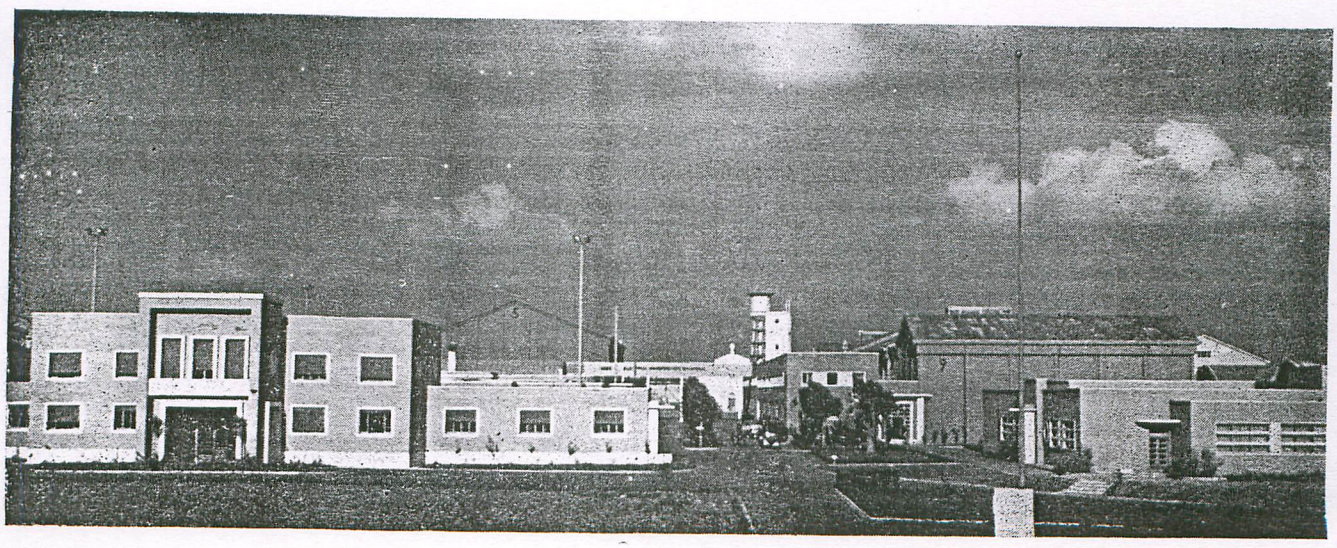
"Filmindia" In Italy

Luckily for every one concerned, there is another man in charge—not an excellency but one having a doctorate—an efficient, smiling of course, obliging man. His name is Dr. Rancati. He is the Assistant Director General and he has heard about India and even read "Filmindia" which I did not believe at first. It seems that a copy of "Filmindia" which we send in exchange to an Italian film magazine is always sent to him for perusal. Dr. Rancati talks English pretty well and he came out with a copy of "Filmindia" as a proof of his bona-fides. Incidentally, I found that the Doctor knew a lot about the film industry all over the world.

I had a warm and wonderful reception. They don't offer tea as we do in India—they give an extra broad smile which stretches from cheek to cheek.

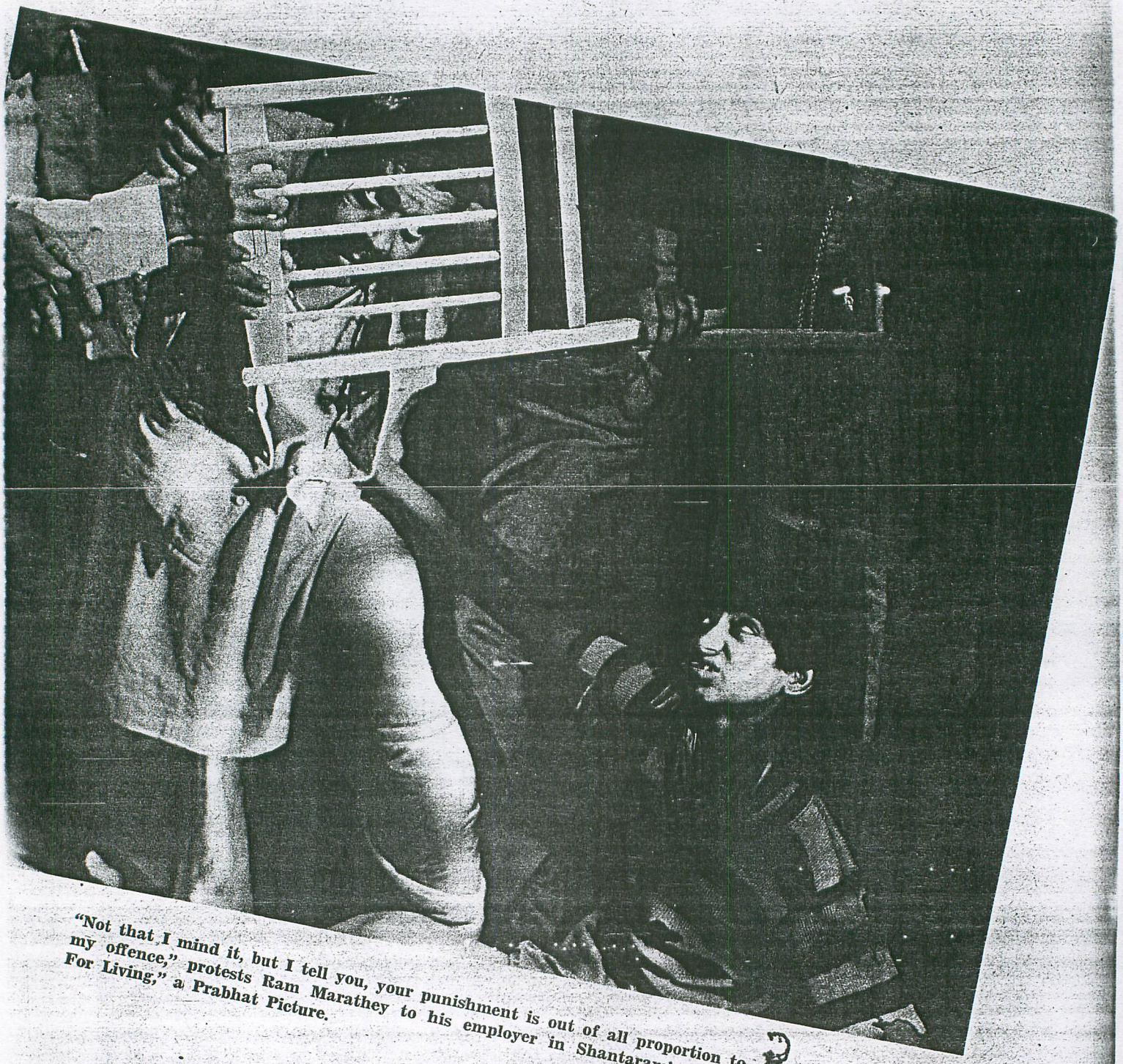
Two hours with the cultured Italian proved a pleasure and at the end left behind an affectionate memory of all Italians. The funny excellencies were forgotten in the friendly and sympathetic atmosphere created by the cultured doctor. Dr. Rancati seemed to know everything—even the principal statistics of the Indian film industry. And what he told me about his own affairs is worth noting:

The Italian film industry is completely controlled by the State. It is not financially helped but it is



A general view of "Cinecitta," the biggest film studio in Italy, at Rome.

Keeping the home fires burning. And what a fire it is to be with these 18-stone pair in action in "LIFE IS FOR LIVING." Between GOURI and BUASAHEB— life becomes a heavy weight contest.



"Not that I mind it, but I tell you, your punishment is out of all proportion to my offence," protests Ram Marathey to his employer in Shantaram's "Life's For Living," a Prabhat Picture.

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directly supported in several other ways. Italy has barely seven film companies, the important four from which, are in Rome and the rest in other districts.

"Chinaychitta"

The biggest studio in Italy is called "Cinecitta" (pronounced: "Chinaychitta"). Italy has 4000 theatres. Seventy-five per cent of these theatres are poorly equipped and the sound reproduction is reported to be bad. Till last year, Italy was producing about 35 pictures a year and relying upon Hollywood to supply the rest of the demand. But during the year, the Government had a quarrel with Hollywood as Hollywood would not agree to receive a fixed price for its pictures. The result is that Hollywood pictures are stopped from coming into Italy. To meet the national demand Italy has now to produce more pictures and this year the Italian studios are expected to produce at least 75 pictures. The incentive for this is provided by the Government by their ban of the American pictures. There will still be a shortage of over 100 pictures. And I think some will be taken from Germany, which country by the way is enjoying several privileges unblushingly. The Italian people don't seem to like it and yet because the Duce wants it, no one questions. Time alone will prove whether the Duce has been playing with fire.

The news-reel business in Italy is entirely in the hands of the Government. It is controlled and conducted by the "Institute Luca" which has several quick moving equipment seen at every public function. Most of the subjects chosen are designed for the glorification of modern Italy. In a single news-reel of 1500 feet which I saw, I found the Duce facing the camera over fifty times. So it is the Duce all over. That news-reel would have become useful to the student of physiognomy.

The Visit to "Cinecitta"

Sharp at three in the afternoon I arrived at the outer gate of the "Cinecitta", Italy's largest and best film studio. The studio is located on a big waste of land four miles out of Rome. As I had expected, a young uniformed 'mussolini' gave me the usual salute which I returned with my customary 'blessing'. I presented my card to him and he checked it up with his own slip and finding the name correct, gave me another salute and ordered the driver to proceed to the office.

A furlong more and Mr. S. Balboni, the production chief was shaking hands with me and welcoming me in fluent English. It seemed that just at the moment he was full up with work but he couldn't help it—orders had to be obeyed, and besides he was the only man in the whole studio who knew English well enough to talk with a journalist. Later on I was told that Balboni had worked 8 years in England and 15 years in Hollywood. No wonder he spoke English well.

With the production chief chaperoning me all over, every department was open for inspection. "Cinecitta" is a huge affair for Italy. For the present we drop comparison with Hollywood.

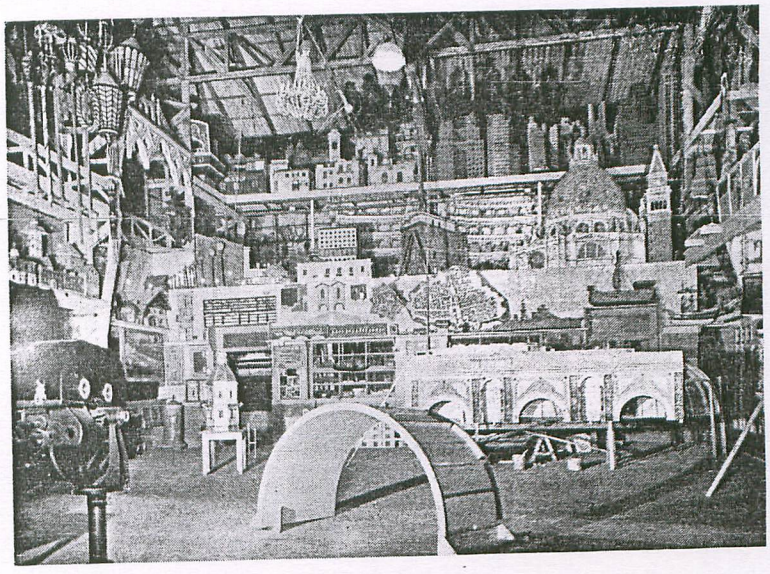
A Film City!

This Italian studio where about sixty pictures will be produced this year has ten sound stages, one of which is considered the largest in the whole of Europe. Over 300 acres of land have been used in building the studios and the initial investment has gone over £.5,00,000. Apart from salaries paid to the stars on contract basis the monthly maintenance expenses of the studio is a little over £10,000 which amount is paid to the technicians and other permanent workers who total 1061 persons.

One finds everything in this studio: An official branch of an Italian Bank; a police station maintained by the police department; a fire brigade maintained by the municipality; several restaurants for different classes of people; a swimming pool: a gymnasium; a club house; different stores; hair dressing saloon; hospital and almost every amenity which we get in a city.

But what surprises most is the way the studio is built, equipped and maintained. Everything in its place and at its distance—spick and span—as if it was only yesterday that the whole affair was built..

The description of the numerous departments will be too long an affair for the purposes of this article. It is enough to know that the "Cinecitta" is a real "Film City" and no humbug about it; and it has men with vision at the top who will soon give Italy a first class film industry.



This room is called the "Magic House" of Cinecitta where all the trick effects are taken. From a storm to a train accident, they "manufacture" everything here.

NASEEM BANOO—

After her fine work in "Divorce" she returns to the screen in "Pukar", a Minerva Picture directed by Mr. Sohrab Modi.

Bombay Calling

This section is the monopoly of "JUDAS" and he writes what he likes and about things which he likes. The views expressed here are not necessarily ours, but still they carry weight because they are written by a man who knows his job.

PRODUCERS AND PROHIBITION

The fateful first of August has come and the dry era has begun in Bombay City and the suburbs. It won't be long before prohibition is enforced in the rest of India, at least in the Congress provinces.

This is neither the place nor the occasion to discuss the rights or wrongs of prohibition. I am only concerned with its reactions on the film industry. Have the producers devoted some thought to this great event in their country?

I know how some of them must be feeling about the advent of the dry days. Personally I can sympathise with them. They will miss the bottle even as I will miss mine. But I am not concerned with our personal troubles but with the effect of prohibition on the Indian film industry.

BRIGHT PROSPECTS

And looking at it this way, I must say the prospect is not so gloomy at all. Indeed, it is distinctly cheerful.

In the case of thousands of habituals it will be found that recourse to the bottle is their method of killing time in the evening. Keep them busy somehow from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. and they won't succumb to the craving for drinks.

With the Bars and the grog shops closed, where and how are they going to spend their evenings? The reply is obvious: In theatres, cabarets, dance halls and cinemas—above all, in **Cinemas!**

Alternative entertainment alone can completely cure a man of the drink habit. Cinema provides it in good measure. Here is a potential clientele of thousands only waiting to be asked to come to the cinemas.

In the villagers and among the poorer folks to whom a bottle of toddy was sometimes the only means of escaping, even for a few moments, from the sordid miseries of life, special efforts will have to be made to popularize films. In this task producers and exhibitors must seek and secure help of the government.

EXAMPLE OF AMERICA

In the United States of America, the enforcement of prohibition by the 18th Amendment coincided with a tremendous increase in the number of theatre-goers and film fans. There was also a phenomenal increase in the number of car-owners and Hollywood as well as Henry Ford cashed in on prohibition.

Similarly in India the crores which will be saved after the abolition of drink will be diverted in new channels. Much of this amount will come to the Indian producers.

But with larger audiences, their responsibility is also greater. It is no use saving people from alcohol and doping them with cheap and vulgar films which only satisfy the elemental lust without providing that cultural content which is the essence of wholesome entertainment.

MAKE ROOM FOR "SHORTS"

Talking about prohibition, I note that several studios are producing two-reeler 'Shorts' for the Prohibition Propaganda Board of the Bombay Government. Ranjit were the first in the field with their "Sharabi".

But it does seem ironical that they were unable to show it along with their own film "Sant Tulsidas". Indeed, I reliably understood it was with considerable difficulty that a cinema was found to show this propaganda 'Short'. Most of the Indian films running in town are so long that there is no room left for squeezing a short subject.

At the Motion Picture Congress, we heard much about the desirability of producing educational films, social propaganda 'Shorts' and news-reels. But where are they to be shown if Indian producers continue to turn out 15,000 and 16,000 feet long feature films?

In this connection we note with approval the policy of the Bombay Talkies to reduce the length of their pictures.

CENSOR OR DICTATOR?

Our local censor inspectors seem to be developing dictatorial tendencies which are not in keeping with their position as public servants.

One of them, it appears, invariably goes to censor trials with a retinue of family and friends. Yet he is known to have objected, in not too civil a language, to the presence of the producers' representatives such as the Director and the important technicians who are there to test their own production.

To the other complaints that I have voiced against these inspectors—as, for instance, my doubts about their lingual capabilities—, I now add this instance of gross abuse of authority.

PLAGIARISTS, PLEASE NOTE!

Apropos of Mr. K. Ahmad Abbas's article "Stop. Thief", published in "Filmindia" (June, 1939), plagiarists and would-be plagiarists should be interested in the news that

> **Miss Margaret Ayer Barnes and her fellow-author Edward Sheldon were awarded 532,153 dollars (approximately 15 lakh rupees) as damages for infringement of the copyright of their play "DISHONOURED LADY" by a film company.**

How many film companies, I would like to know, can afford to pay 15 lakhs?

This news should have a salutary effect on all those who are producing or contemplating to produce films "based" on the ideas stolen from foreign films, novels or plays.

In this connection there are rumours that shortly we may see the following films or books translated on the Indian screen:—

1. Chu Chin Chow
2. The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse
3. Charge of The Light Brigade
4. Prodigal Son (Novel by Hall Caine).

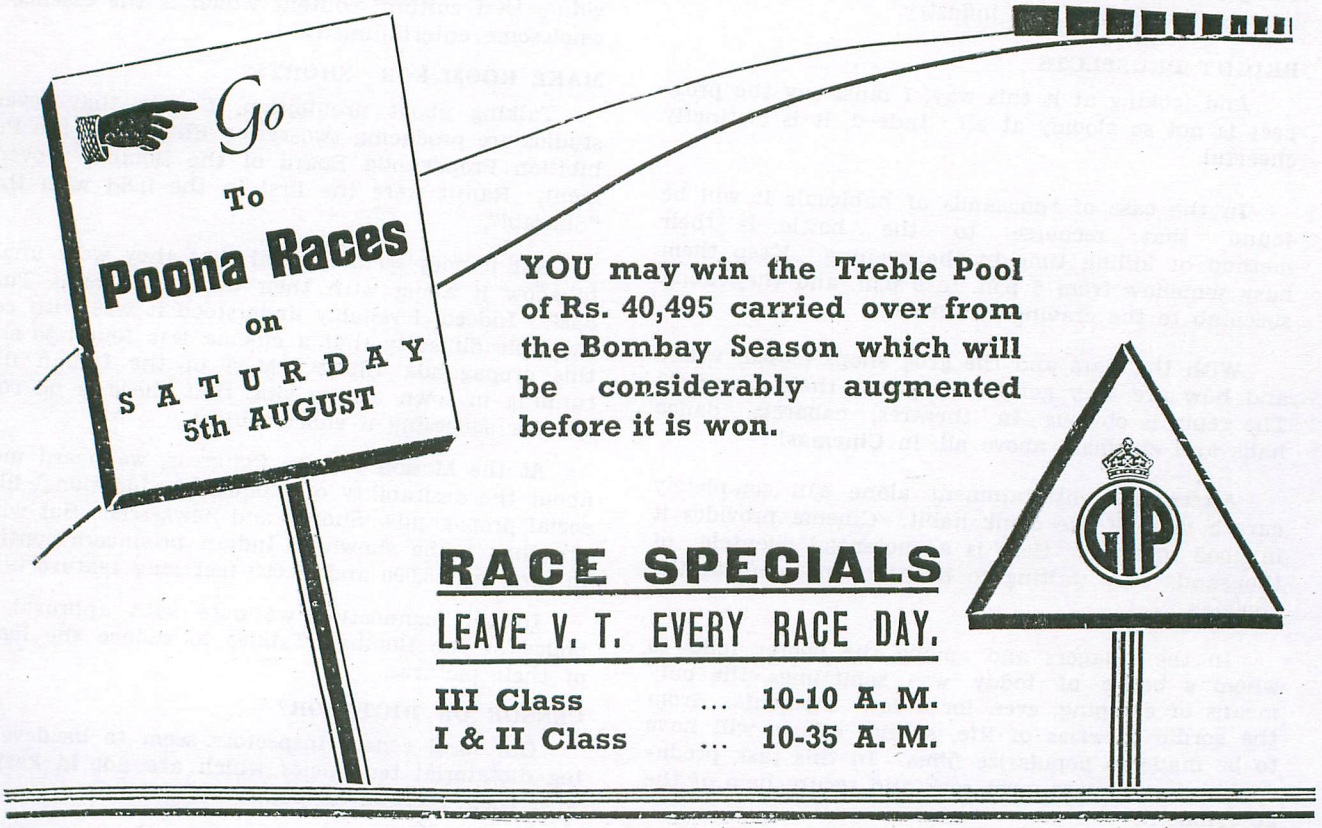
At this rate I won't be surprised if someone comes out with a "Confessions of A Baghi Spy" based on the Warner's film exposing the Nazi Spies!

THE EDITOR RECOMMENDS

DURGA (Bombay Talkies)

SANT TULSIDAS (Ranjit)

SAPERA (New Theatres)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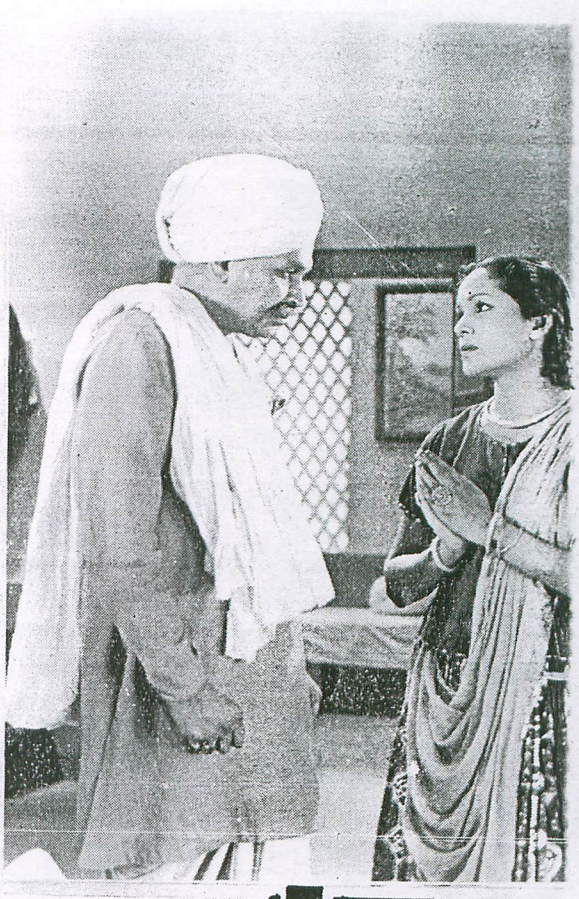
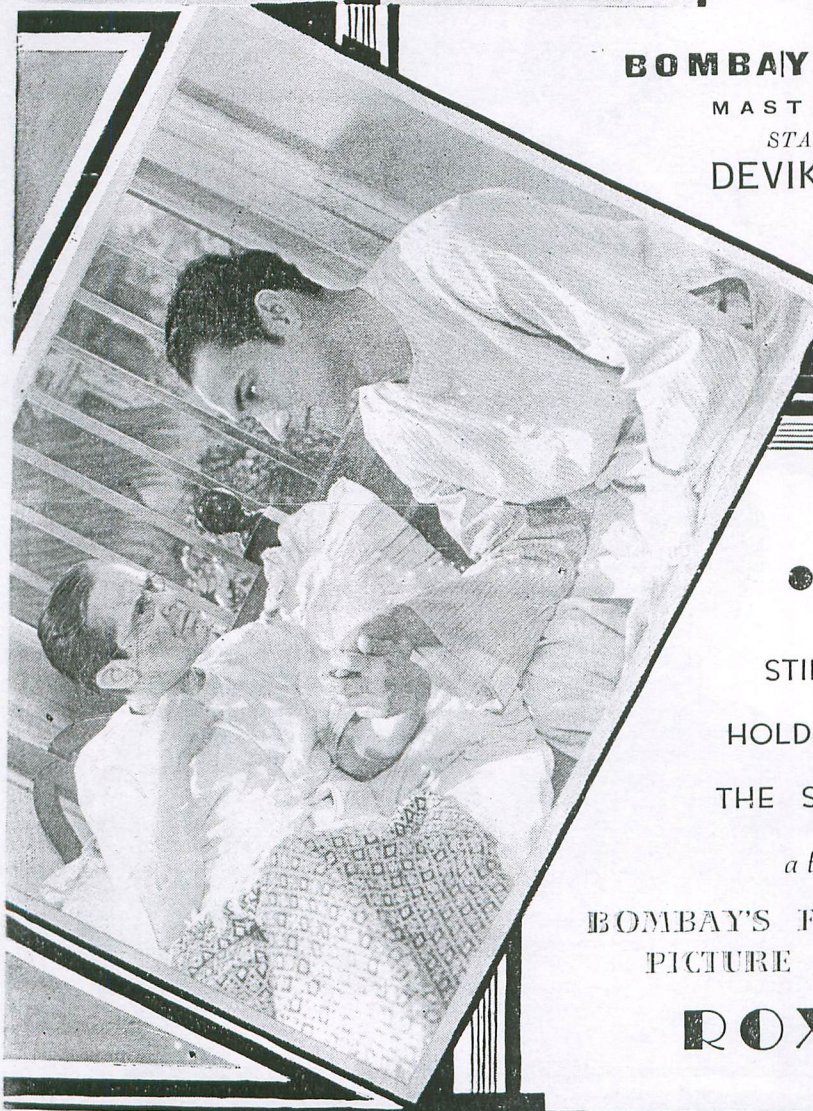


BOMBAY TALKIES'

MASTERPIECE

STARRING

DEVIKA RANI



STILL

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A Warning To Exhibitors

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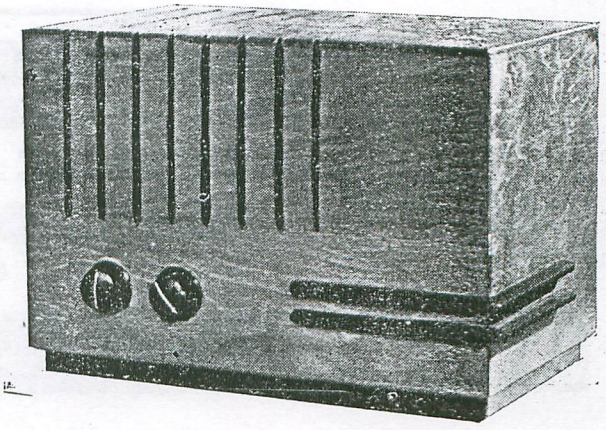
OZONE GENERATORS

Why ! Should India Lag Behind



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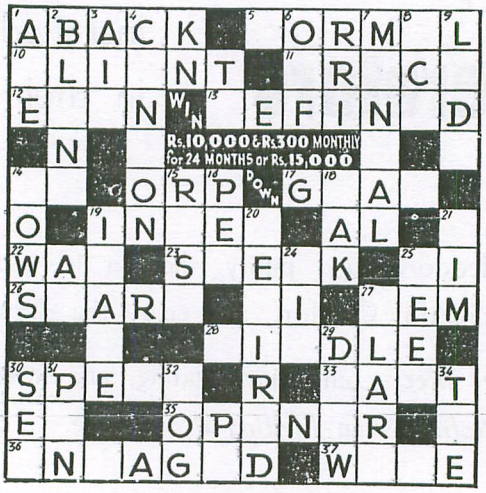
This Offer brings you another golden opportunity of reaping pleasure and profit. The intriguing First Prize consists of Rs. 10,000 Down and Rs. 300 monthly for 24 months or the huge sum of Rs. 15,000 Down. The Runners-up cash reservation is no less than Rs. 8,000 and the Extra Prizes are, in themselves, extremely covetable, including a Rs. 50 'Buy-What-You-Like' Voucher for each One Error solver. The greater share of these awards will not be won by mere chance or guesswork, it will be won by those who study the Puzzle closely before recording their solutions. *Remember that when you tackle the intriguing Clues in the Practice Square below.*

CLUES ACROSS

1. Little that the Dictators do takes us thus any more!
5. Nowadays young men and women become friends without waiting for introductions of this kind
10. Supple
11. The betel-nut palm
12. To obtain reward for labour or merit
13. Ideas which are clearly this usually command our respect
17. Definite one often urges a man to sustained endeavour
19. Jumbled spelling of *inure*
22. Prolonged heat is apt to make people this
23. People who are prone to do this irresponsibly are seldom trustworthy
26. Impressionable women are particularly susceptible to a deliberately flattering one
27. Precious stone
28. It is often difficult to keep one's temper with persons who do this habitually
30. Nowadays youngsters of both sexes seem to this far more than is necessary or beneficial
33. Enraptured
35. Requisite for unsealing tins and bottles
36. People who become this without reflection usually bitterly rue their hastiness
37. Plural of *was*

CLOSING DATE AUGUST 11th.

N.B.—The Entry Fee in this Competition is Re. 1 per Entry Square and Entry Squares will be published in the issues of July 23rd and 30th.



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ONLY ENTRY SQUARES CUT OUT FROM

"THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA"

of July 23rd or 30th will be accepted.

CLUES DOWN

1. Large monkey
2. When circumstances require it diplomatic person is able to conceal anger beneath this expression
3. The breath of life
4. Most of us find a mighty one somewhat awe-inspiring
6. Awkward lout
7. Such work is often far more monotonous than is generally realised
8. Term for an expert airman
9. Reserved and bashful type of man is apt to be tongue-tied in the company of . . .
14. Young lovers are inclined to give theirs an exaggerated importance
15. Mothers often succeed in quietening peevish infant by means of one
16. Unrestrained this is liable to be dangerous to an author
18. Tree which produces acorns
19. Such comments are often difficult to suffer patiently
20. Withdrawn
21. Every lively young man has this
24. To assist
25. Harsh treatment is apt to make a sensitive child this
27. Fierce light
29. Pulled or dragged
30. Observe
31. Misguided humorist sometimes causes acute annoyance with this
32. Domestic pet
34. Definite article

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The EDITOR'S MAIL

Readers "when you are worried" write to me. I will do my best in serving you. Serious matters will be treated seriously, while flippant letters will receive like replies.—The Editor.

From: S. L. Nawani (Karachi)

Is Renuka Devi a Muslim Girl? What is her real name and where is she from?

Yes, Renuka Devi is a Muslim girl and her real name is Khursheed. She comes from Aligarh and she is very well educated.

Is it not grand to be an actress?

In what particular way do you mean? Do you know that our film actresses have to work very hard—sometimes continuously for twenty-four hours—with paint on their face and under strong lights? And after all this, they are still open to be criticised—and often in very loose terms—by a man who may pay only four annas for a ticket. Is it a life so much worth desiring? I suggest that you should visit one of the studios whilst working and then tell me whether the lot of our actresses is very enviable.

From: N. S. Prem (Benares)

Is it necessary to marry after being a film actor or an actress?

Do you mean to say that film studios also provide mates to people who act? Are the film artists not ordinary human beings with natural wants? Like you and me, even the film stars have to get married to lead a home life.

From: Govindrao Marathe (Allahabad)

I am a well known Hindi poet. I have composed a poem on Shanta Apte and I wish to send it to her. Can you tell me how I can do it?

I don't think Shanta Apte needs a poem from you, being a poem herself. But now that you have written it, the easiest way to send it to her is to post it. By the way don't forget to send me a copy. I must add an exciting finale about her recent (most poetic, wasn't it?) hunger-strike?

From: R. Radhakrishnan (Hubli)

General Films of Bombay seem to be keeping quiet for a long time. When is their "Pati-Patni" likely to come to the Screen? What about further productions?

The company is quiet but the proprietors are not. But wait a while as "Pati-Patni" will be soon released and the company will probably produce more pictures in association with the Sagar Movietone, if the present negotiations come off. If you have liked their pictures, write so to M. A. Fazalbhoy, Opera House, Bombay, and he will feel encouraged to start again. Producers always like praise and it often does them a lot of good.

From: V. V. Darhe (Nagpur City)

What is the difference between the "Cine-Colour" and the "Techni-colour" pictures?

These are two different processes of taking pictures in national colours. The Techni-colour process is far better than the other one and a number of pictures have been produced with it. Have you seen the 'Robin Hood'? It is a techni-colour picture, while 'Kisan Kanya,' produced in India was a cine-colour picture.

From: Hikmat U. Khan (Gwalior)

Between the two—Prithviraj and Motilal—who is superior in acting?

Both the boys are very good artistes. In fact, they are two of our best. But a good performance depends on the artiste having the correct role. Very rarely our artistes get the correct role. I would, however, like Motilal in light comedy roles and Prithviraj in a dignified portrayals. To cite instances: Motilal in "Three Hundred Days and After" and Prithviraj in "Vidyapati" were ideally cast and both of them came up to my expectations.

Can Greta Garbo be ranked as the best film actress of the world?

No. There are many better than her. She has been well advertised and suitably typed from one picture to another, but I doubt whether she is as versatile as Norma Shearer.

From: K. P. Randeria (Sukkur)

If the film industry in India is making good progress, how is it that so many exhibitors lose money and fail in their business?

There are many reasons for this. One is the unhealthy competition which we find in smaller towns where there are a couple of cinemas too many. The other is the exhorbitant minimum guarantee which some of the producers and the distributors demand for their pictures, thereby leaving no profit for the exhibitor. Erratic quality of our pictures is still another reason. Our pictures never have any uniform appeal or quality with the result that out of every twenty pictures, we have one successful picture with which the exhibitor is expected to cover his loss on the other pictures. This problem, however, was seriously discussed at the recent Indian Motion Picture Congress, where the exhibitors did not spare the producers, and something better and more definite in the interests of the exhibitors is bound

to come out in the course of time. And now don't rush and open a cinema in Sukkur. It will be again one too many.

From: D. N. Murty (Nagpur)

Which is the most progressive film company in India at present?

You have used the word 'progressive' and it has a special meaning. I think, Huns Pictures of Kolhapur is the most progressive company of India. The rest are still working on the old track. Not that they do not occasionally produce very good pictures but they just don't display the enterprise and fast progress which distinguish the Huns Pictures. If Huns will pursue their present policy of production a little longer they will soon be at the top.

From: T. G. Surianarayanan (Madras)

Why do the film actresses change their original names and take screen names?

Taking an attractive screen name is not only a fashion but a commercial necessity. A good name always attracts a good crowd. The style started first in Hollywood and India adopted it. In India a screen name is absolutely necessary, as several of our stars are named most unromantically, e.g., Vithal, Sakhu, Bhima, Imam, etc. These names fit well elsewhere but not for the films where a girl is expected to have glamour not only in her person but also in her name. A screen name must have a very good ear value and it does attract attention till the artiste herself lets you down.

From: Narayan S. Vaidya (Parbhani)

You always praise Baburao Pendharkar for his 'Best acting' while there are others worth praising. By the way, what is behind this?

The only one thing which is behind this is the excellent work which Baburao has done so far and is expected to do in future. I don't say that we have no other good actors. We have. But in my opinion Baburao Pendharkar is still the best character actor we have. If you had seen as many pictures as I have seen you would have agreed with me readily. And now don't be jealous of your own man. You must give the devil his due, which, of course, doesn't mean that Baburao is not a saint.

From: Ram Murty (Jodhpur)

Where is Bimla Kumari of Baghban?

She has now become the daughter of Zambo in Bhavnani's jungle productions. At this rate she will be soon taken on a show tour of India.

Which picture did you try to direct?

Now, never mind that. It is an old story which was never completed and now don't revive it. By the way, I did not merely try but I did actually direct. But you must have been a little kid then and you were lucky to have escaped.

Is Devika Rani related to Dr. Rabindranath Tagore?

Ask her or ask that old man. I am tired of answering such questions. I am interested in Devika only as a screen artiste.

From: Chhotoo Dayal (Durban)

Do the producers of Wadia pictures show any sense when they produce such pictures like "Hurricane Hansa," "Flying Ranee" etc., which are so unnatural and unconvincing?

If you see the Wadia balance sheet at the end of the year, you will realize that the Wadias have a lot of commercial sense, which earns good money. Do you know that the Wadia Movietone is one of our really financially sound companies? Wadias may not help Art but they do help themselves. An industry needs all sorts of people for it to be called an industry. And yet, I wish that Wadias, with their huge resources, had taken a turn for good social pictures.

From: Ismail Ahmed (Surat)

I want the life story of the late Gul Hamid?

While he lived, he was loved. I wish people would say the same of me, when I am gone. No such luck, old boy.

Is Sushila of "Mother India" married?

Not yet, though it came off in the picture. Wait a little more, she is still a kid.

From: K. G. Krishna (Hyderabad)

To which foreign stations do the Indian films go?

The Indian pictures are being shown at most of the places where we find Indians, e.g., Suva, South and East Africa, Trinidad, Mauritius and some other stations in South America. Our pictures have still to go to Europe, America and Japan.

From: Bipin B. (Baroda)

Here in the Baroda College a majority of the girls imitate Shanta Apte in singing and acting. Do you think that they go up in the estimation of the college boys?

I do not know the particular tastes of the boys of the Baroda College, but Shanta Apte is not a bad idol for a romantic dream of the youth. I only hope that the girls in your college do not imitate Shanta in her temper. That would be very risky for the boys.

A friend of mine dies after Prabha and he is likely to lose his head. What can cure him?

How many times has he died so far? If he is still alive, kill him and bury him. I shall ask Prabha to grant him one good weeping scene. Prabha is a married lady and is a very happy mother of some children. Tell that to your friend and the news might cure him.

From: H. Venkanna (Kurnool)

Do you think that the girls who take to film acting, after a time, develop a feeling of scorn for the matrimonial bond?

No. On the contrary those who are not married are very anxious to get married and settle down to a peaceful life. While those who are already married jealously maintain their marital tie, as a haven of refuge for the future. After all a girl's future is in the home and no home can be complete without a man.

How is that the Bombay Talkies haven't got a single singing actor like Surendra or Saigal?

They have got a charming actress who outweighs the weight of both of them put together. And she is such a charming tease.

From: Miss Ratna M. Apte (Belgaum)

Is Ram Apte related to Shanta Apte?

No. Nor are you. Do you think that all the Aptes in Maharashtra are the members of one big family?

Where is Ratnaprabha now?

At present she is not working in any picture. And I don't think she will again, at least for a long time to come. She has sort of retired from the acting profession. But while she did, didn't she charm us all with her divine music?

From: Y. A. V. Patel (Raichur)

This time if I do not get a reply to my question, I shall be compelled to take legal steps against you which will be unpleasant to you as well as to me. There is a limit to everything, even for patience. Now my question: Please enlighten me whether Pramilla is married or not married; her exact age; is she still in her teens; her unversity education; her relatives; who are the hangers on; or parasites who live on her money; her pay in the studio; where was she born; her present address; with door number and name of the street; does she give interviews to one and all; what do you think of her beauty; can she be called divinely beautiful angel; her bewitching laugh with dimpled cheeks and her double teeth just one over the other while she laughs with inviting, loving almond shaped eyes simply make me mad; is there any cure for my madness?

And now Pramilla will also go mad. Well, friend, your case seems to be chronic and incurable. Try marriage as the final desperate remedy.

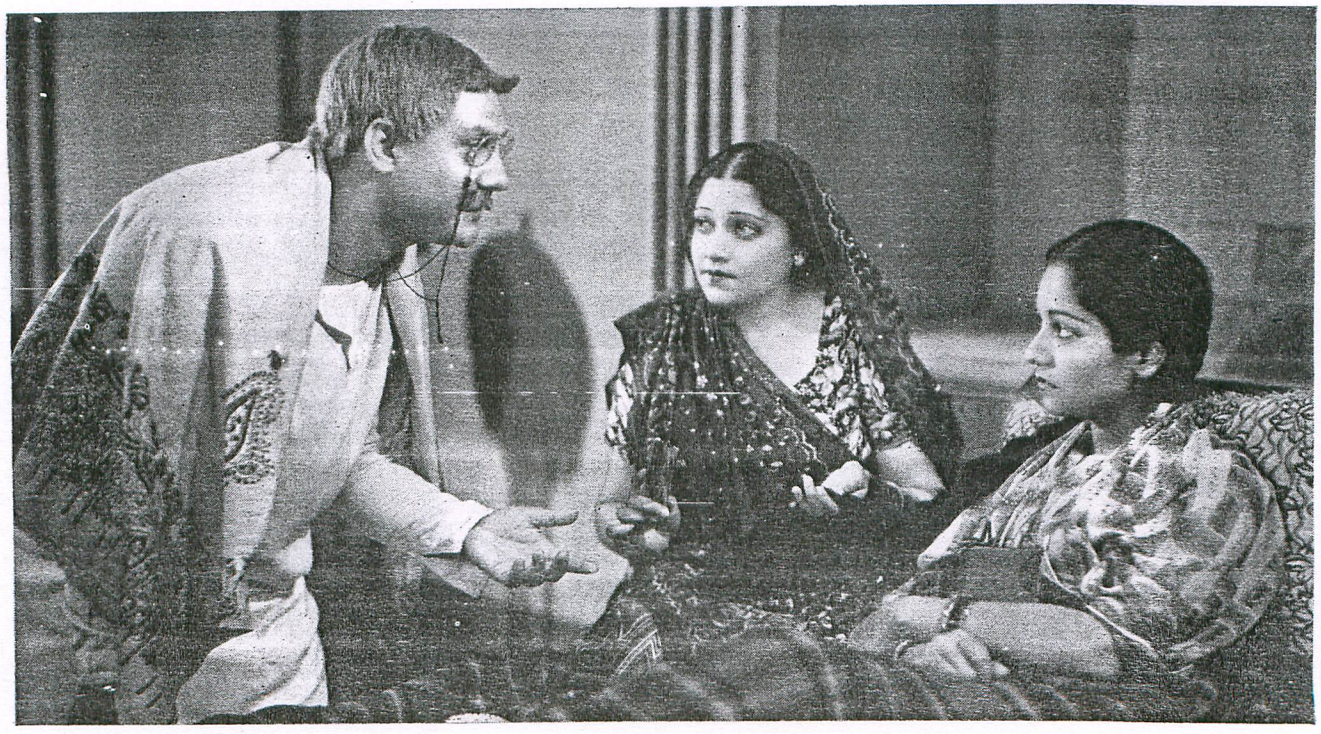
From: M. A. Salebhoy (Bombay).

Is "The Mill" a very old picture?

As old as the windmill of which you read in poems.

How many actors and actresses are the subscribers of "Filmindia"?

All except Sabita Devi. She says she never reads it. Probably she gets no time.



Gohar, Mazhar and Rajkumari seems to be having a heated discussion in Sardar Chandulal Shah's Achhut', which is nearing completion at the Ranjit Studios.

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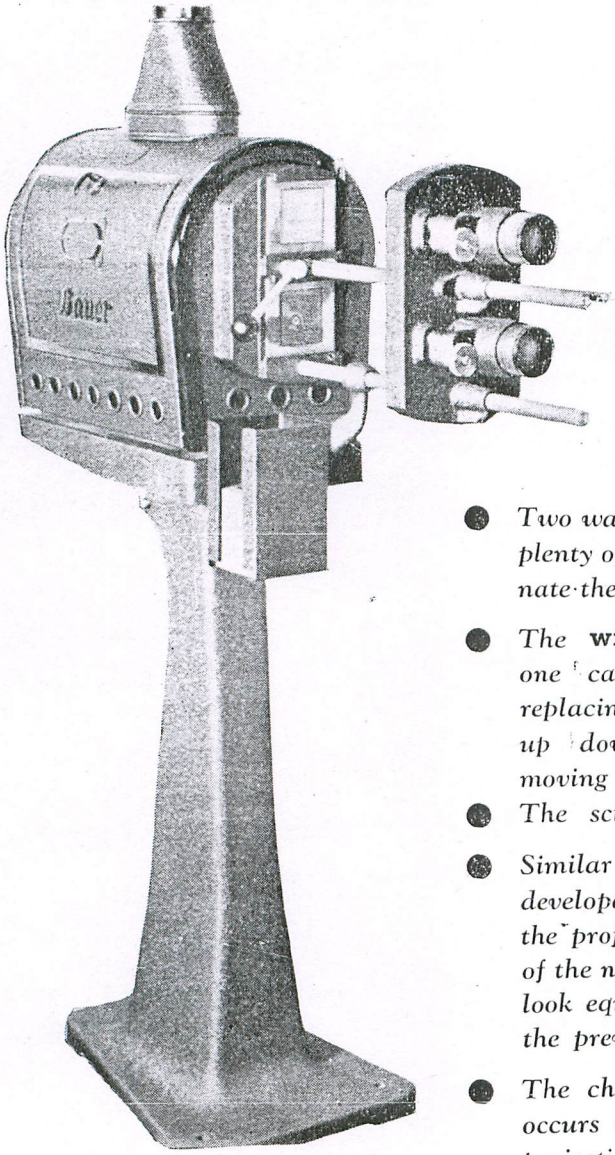

- *Two ways of fading over without dark intervals provide plenty of variation, the frequently changing pictures fascinate the spectator without wearying him.*
- *The* **wipe out** *unfolds the slides just as you unroll one carpet over another. That is you see a new picture replacing the old one from down upwards or from up downwards and only a horizontal line is seen moving up or down.*
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Notes and News—

INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR FILM CONGRESS

The Fifth International Amateur Film Congress was held at Zurich (Switzerland) from the 4th to 11th June 1939 and it was for the first time that India was represented at the Congress by Mr. K. S. Hirlekar, Hony. Secretary of the Amateur Cine Society of India.

It is interesting to note that fourteen different nations of the world including Japan had sent their films to the Congress and the countries which got the prizes were Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Holland, England, for the best films under various categories such as: entertainment, instructional, topical and miscellaneous categories of films. Keen interest is being shown in the proceedings of the Congress every year which would be clear from the fact that twelve nations sent their Delegates to the Congress to participate in and further the aims and objects of the Congress set forth by this International Body to advance the cause of amateur film work and international understanding and co-operation between various countries through films. In view of this, the Congress welcomed it very much that India sent its Representative this year who was also a member of the Jury examining the films received for competition and it is hoped that films also will be received from next year for competition, dealing with life and various aspects of the country.

The Executive Committee of the Congress had arranged a very nice programme for the Delegates throughout the Congress week and excursions were arranged to very interesting places with the help of the Swiss Government and Railways.

According to the invitations extended the next Congress will be held some time in June 1940 at Stockholm (Sweden) and the future sessions at Budapest 1941, Rome 1942, London 1943 and Warsaw 1944.

ORTHODOXY UP IN ARMS

We reproduce the following from "The Bombay Chronicle" Cinema page and command it to the attention of the censors and the public:—

"Ever since the movies became popular in India producers have had to contend with the peculiar whims of the orthodoxy, distrustful of the power of the new art medium, imagining attacks upon their religious susceptibilities where none are intended.

A certain section of orthodox Muslim 'maulavis' and conservative journalists have been protesting, on one ground or another against practically every film dealing with the life and loves of Muslim kings. The Pandits have not lagged behind!

They raised a hue and cry against Prabhat's "Beyond The Horizon" in which a scene depicted the fall of an idol. Others, in the Punjab, saw in Bombay Talkies patriotic film "Janma Bhoomi" an attack upon Hindu Sahukars and Ayurveda.

The latest instance of this nature is provided by a few Brahmins in Bombay who have lodged a rather feeble and pointless protest against "Sant Tulsidas." No one is likely to take them seriously. The film was shown by Ranjit to such eminent Hindu savants as Pandit Malaviya. They have approved of it.

WHEN NOT TO USE THE SCISSORS

In one case, however, these super-sensitive self-appointed guardians of public morals have triumphed.

Some of them in Poona met together and collectively agreed to be shocked at certain harmless pleasantries in Huns' "Brandy Bottle."

Mr. K. S. Hirlekar, after his European Tour, is sailing to New York to see the World's Fair.

It appears that in this film the hero dreams that he is in heaven and is surprised to find the girl he loves officiating as Radha to Lord Krishna. He demands his girl and Lord Krishna gives her back in good grace.

This scene, about hundred and forty feet, has now been deleted by the Bombay Censors.

This naturally provoked Maharashtrian intellectuals who mustered strong at a meeting in Poona and protested against the action of the Bombay Censors.

The censors should know not only when to use their scissors but also when not to use them."

A STAR ON HUNGER-STRIKE

The outstanding news of the month was that of Shanta Apte resorting to Hunger-strike for non-payment of her dues for the number of days she was away on leave.

Everyone was surprised to note that the star should have adopted this procedure instead of coming to an amicable settlement with her proprietors.

In fact this procedure did the star no good except giving her some newspaper publicity.

AND ANOTHER ROBBED!

Mr. Surendra of Sagar Film Co., while on his way home from the studio was waylaid and robbed the other night, and was deprived of a wrist-watch, a gold Ring and a few rupees. Let us hope that the culprits may not have got the idea from a recent Crime Picture!

PRODUCER SUED

Romilla, the heroine of Rex Pictures "Thunder", now running at a local cinema, has brought a suit for injunction against the picture for recovering the salary that was due to her.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

(Ashok Kumar is leaving Bombay Talkies very shortly).

(Old Khan Bahadur Irani is staging a come back—of course his partner Mr. Abdulally and manager Rustom Broacha are with him.)

(It is also heard that Sulochana, D. Billimoria, R. Chowdhary & Co., will be given their respective places in the studio.)

(Chowdhary is writing a Screen Story for Ranjit.)

(Leela Chitnis after her fine piece of acting in Ranjit's "Tulsidas" has been signed by the Huns Picture, Kolhapur.)

(Mr. Baburao Pai of Famous Pictures Ltd., has resigned from the Distributors' Associations on account of some difference of opinion with some members.)

INVITATION TO INDIA

Prof. O. G. Ohanian, Vice-President and Representative of the Federation and Academia of Asia, sends us the following:—

"The Federation International des Corps Savants de Researches and the Academia of Asia are desirous of giving this opportunity and paying honour to some of the eminent Indian Motion Picture Specialists & Film Organisations, to enrol them as members of the above-mentioned Institutions, which are today recognised as the largest Scientific centres of th World.

"The candidates will be electe and recommended for membershi and Diploma by the Academia Honorary Representative in Indi Prof. Dr. Hon. Cous. Bincy Kuma Sarcar (Calcutta University) an Academician Prof. Dr. O. G. Oha nian (Bombay) with the kind hel and support of the Motion Pictur Society of India, the Bengal Filn Association and Madras Film Lea gue.

"Selection will be made as follows:—

"One pioneer for the highest degree, for membership—six Producers, seven Exhibitors, five distributors, seven Film Journals, three Motion Picture Societies, eight film Directors, two Art Directors, nine Screen Actresses, ten Screen Actors, two Production Managers, two Chief Technicians, five Cameramen, five Sound Engineers, four Musical Composers, five Screen Story writers, one Motion Picture School."

Mrs. Jyotsna Bhole

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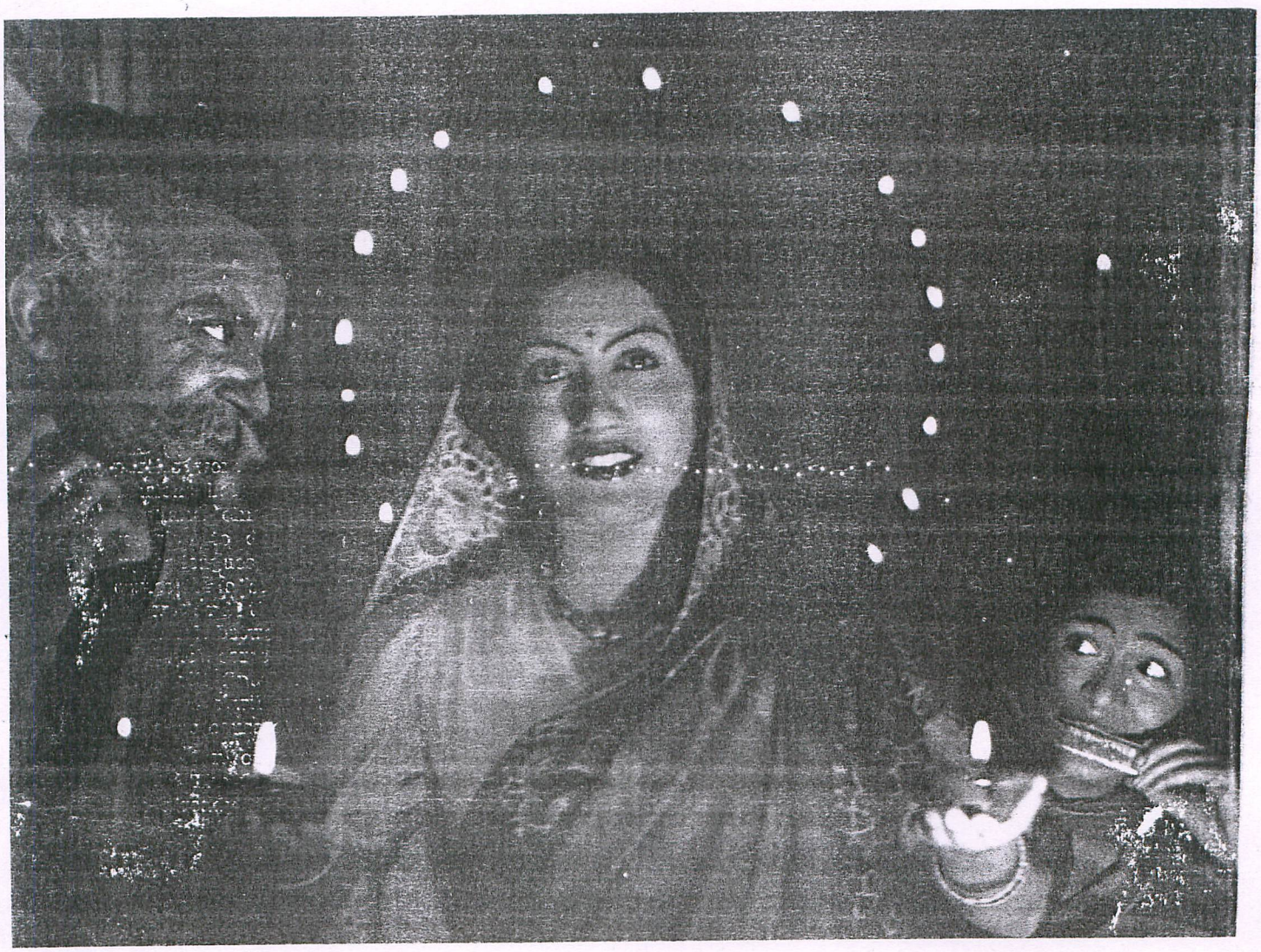
"Life is for Living"—Yes. That's what has infused courage into Shanta Hublikar to wait for Shahu Modak with patience, though her hopes have been melting away like the burning candle, in Shantaram's "Life's For Living," a Prabhat Picture.



The Light that failed. Mrs. Shanta Hublikar, Chhotu and Ram Marathe in Shantaram's "Life's For Living", a Prabhat picture.

SITARA—the Ranjit star, as she appears in Supreme Pictures' maiden film "My Eyes".

Prem Adib

Trilok Kapoor

Anuradha

NEW

GIVE THEM

DURING the deliberations of the Indian Motion Picture Congress when interested parties were trying to create dissensions between the film journalists and cine artistes, I had an occasion to declare, on behalf of my colleagues, that when the time comes for a struggle between producers and the cine artistes (as the clash between labour and capital must come in every industry) they will find that only the film journalists will be there to champion the cause of the workers.

Such an occasion has now arrived. The first shot in the battle has already been fired.

UNNECESSARY, UNFAIR AND SUICIDAL

I learn on good authority that a number of producers have decided to pull down their high-salaried stars and to instal so-called "fresh talent" in their place.

I also know that the motive behind this decision is not solicitude for real talent or a genuine search for "new faces" but the short-sighted capitalist's policy of cutting down expenditure at all cost. Not content with the profits they are making thanks to the box-office 'pull' of their respective stars—these producers want to make more money by axing down the star salaries.

In my opinion this policy is unnecessary, unfair to the film artistes and suicidal for the producers themselves.

WITH THEIR LIFE-BLOOD!

Let me make it clear at the outset that I am not one of the star-worshippers. I know the film stars (some of whom are my personal friends) too well to have any illusions about them. Human beings like us all, they are a varied lot—good, bad and indifferent,—they have their failings as anyone else of us has. But on the whole I believe, they are hard-working, sincerely devoted to their Art and, with a few exceptions, not very well compensated for their efforts. The Indian film industry owes a lot to them and Prithviraj was right when, at the Film Lunch, he said "We have served the industry with our life-blood!"

I also affirm that on sheer merit our stars, by themselves, are not inferior to the much-boosted luminaries of Hollywood. This is not my own individual opinion but the verdict of many impartial observers including several foreigners who have expressed their frank admiration for some of our leading film artistes. Indeed, it is a tribute to their inherent talent that they have been able to make their mark despite bad direction, poor technique, atrocious make-up and lack of proper publicity.

FALSE ECONOMY

Another fact which few can dispute is that **Star value plays an important part in the box-office success of a picture.** Exceptions there are to every rule but hunreds of instances can be quoted to prove that this contention is substantially correct. Leaving aside the limited pull of such recent no-star pictures as "The Only Way," "My Eyes" and "Sadhana" (all of which should have done better with a few better-known names in the cast), we have the edifying example of such a superb picture as "Bari Didi" failing to be popular while the much inferior "Street Singer" drew crowds because of the names of Saigal and Kanan-bala.

Thus to suddenly raise raw 'youngsters' to stardom and discard experienced (and popular) talent will ultimately prove to be a suicidal policy on the part of the producers. It is false economy which in the long run will prove to be terribly expensive.

To this the producers may possibly retort that the pictures of so many 'stars' have proved to be box-office failures. They may point out that Kumar made only one "Puran Bhakt" that Motilal's

OR

Motilal

Durga Khote

Gohar

Hansa

Meenaxi

Arun

WA ★ STARS

M A SQUARE DEAL

By

K. Ahmad Abbas

★

Have The Producers Made A Secret Pact to substitute popular 'Veterans' with 'Raw Material'?

"It's True" failed to draw, that "Dharti Mata" flopped despite Saigal and Umashashi, that Sulochana's "Prem Ki Jyot" did not shine, that Durga Khote's "Sathi" did not come up to the level of her "Seeta."

I wish they produce this argument because then I can raise the whole issue of why pictures fail in spite of good work by stars.

FROM "SAROJINI" TO "PRESIDENT"

Kamlesh Kumari's sensational rise to stardom in "President" is a matter of recent history. But do many of you recall that some time before that she had appeared under a different name in a picture called "Sarojini" produced at Bombay? No one noticed her in the Bombay picture which was badly produced and collapsed at the first showing while under Nitin Bose's direction her talent was effectively brought out on the screen. It is true that Kumar made only one "Puran Bhakt" but then that was the only picture in which he had the advantage of competent direction. After that he has been appearing under men who have failed to make the best use of his talent and yet whenever he got a little chance (as in "Hilal" and recently in "Thokar") he has shown that he has the stuff of which good actors are made.

HERE'S A GOLD MINE

"It's True" that Motilal could not turn Chowdhrie's picture into a box-office 'hit.' That was because the scenarist-Director gave him no scope for any good acting. Indeed, sometimes I think that his very first, "Lure Of The City," was his best film and that after that no one has been able to fully utilize his latent talent. Still he has carried, practically single-handed, such successful pictures as "Doctor Madhurika," "Jagirdar" and "We Three." It is one of the misfortunes of the Indian film industry that Motilal has not yet had the chance to work under a really first rate Director. A film starring Motilal with Devika Rani or Kananbala, directed by Nitin Bose or Shantaram,—why, there is a gold mine for you!

I can go on quoting similar instances by the dozen, in which excellent artistes have been 'wasted' by being miscast or handed over to incompetent directors. Is it the fault of Leela Chitnis that between "Chhaya" and "Sant Tulsidas" she could not make a 'hit'? You can't expect an artiste with her talent to make a success of a silly film like "Gentleman Daku"!

The success of a film depends upon so many diverse factors that (unlike the stage) an individual player, however talented, cannot make it a success by his or her own effort.

India does not lack stars. India lacks producers, directors and scenarists who have the imagination and the ability to make use of the considerable histrionic talent we already possess. By trying new stellar combinations, the producers are simply trying to shift their own responsibility for the failure of their pictures.

VALUE OF EXPERIENCE

This does not mean that (except in very, very rare cases) a good director can overnight make a front rank star out of anybody picked up on the street. **Experience is an invaluable asset for a film career** and the most talented beginner cannot hope to beat the old hands at this game. Consider the case of Saigal. A great singer But four or five years ago how many people could have acclaimed him as a first rate **actor?** Very few. Yet today experience has turned him into a top-notcher as evidenced by his performances in "President" and "Dushman." Stars are not infallible gods but they certainly have stored rich experience which entitles them to

(Continued on Page 27)

Kamlesh Kumari

Saigal

E. Billimoria

SABITA DEVI—Star and Producer of Sudhama Productions, as she appears in "As You Please." her first picture after leaving Sagar.

Kicks and Kisses

If at first you don't succeed with a girl, try a little ardor.

* * *

I know of a Scotch girl who left High School because she received no interest from her principal.

* * *

Divorce is the eternal try again angle.

* * *

A man's word may be law in his own home but his wife's is the Supreme Court.

* * *

No man can serve two masters but yes-men can serve hundreds.

* * *

The nations must come to peace, or go to pieces.

* * *

"Love" is the only game that is never postponed on account of darkness.

* * *

Women were made without a sense of humour so they would love men not laugh at them.

* * *

A poet must have imagination. He must imagine people are going to read his poems.

Two men about-town were discussing the high cost of loving. "I am in love and I can't afford to get married," said the bachelor.

"That's nothing" said the other. "I'm in love and I can't afford a divorce."

* * *

An example of stark extravagance would be a necktie on a nudist.

* * *

The pen is mightier than the sword, because you can't sign checks with a sword.

* * *

A woman's face is her fortune, only when it draws a lot of interest.

* * *

If a girl doesn't watch her figure the boys won't.

* * *

The man who is always asking for a loan is always left alone.

* * *

One man who always makes money by going to the dogs is the chiropodist.

I know of a girl who is so modest she has to leave the room to change her mind.

* * *

Two men were arguing as to which smelled worse, a tramp or a goat. They agreed to leave it to the Judge.

"All right" said the judge, "bring in your evidence."

The goat was led in and the Judge fainted.

The tramp was led in and the goat fainted.

* * *

A Bank Clerk who had completed 30 years of faithful service retired with a comfortable fortune of Rs. 60,000. He amassed this large sum through courage, enterprise, initiative, attention to duty, faithfulness, the careful investment of his savings, and the death of an uncle who left him Rs. 59,999.

* * *

"What's your worst sin?"

"My vanity. I spend hours before the mirror admiring my beauty."

"That isn't vanity, that's imagination."

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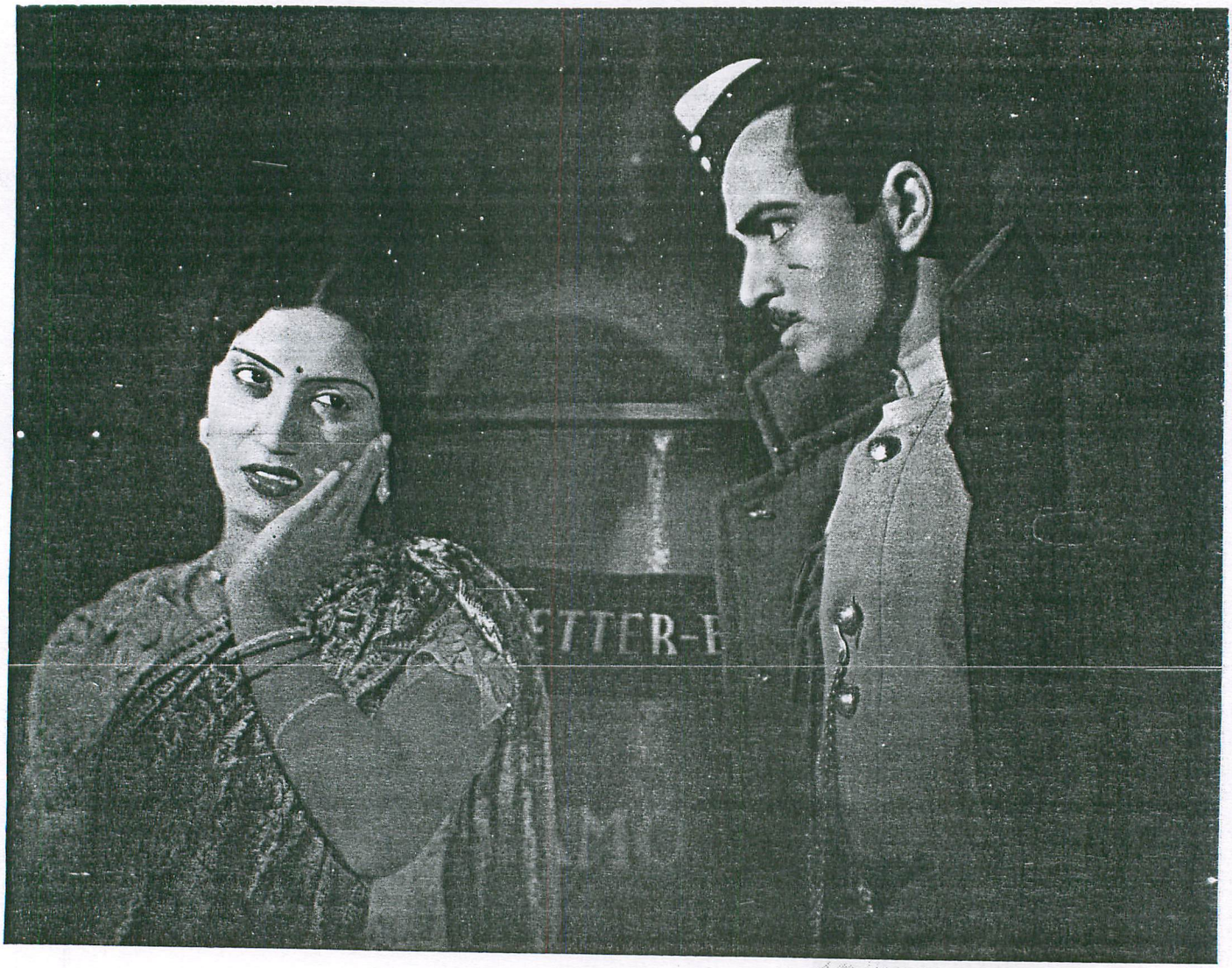


"Hugh! After all you are a policeman!", says Shanta Hublikar with contempt. Upright and honest Shahu Modak feels insulted for himself and his tribe, in Shantaram's "Life's For Living," a Prabhat Picture.

New ★★★ or Old

Continued from page 25

greater eminence than those who have hardly got rid of camera shyness.

Far be it from me to suggest that younger artistes should not be encouraged. But I do maintain that the Indian producers have no right to clamour for "fresh talent" and "new faces" unless they have first shown what they can do with the already available stars. The whole lot of them—our Motilals, Kumars, Prithvirajs, Devika Ranis, Durga Khotes, Leela Chitnis', Sitaras, Madhuris, E.Billimorias, etc., —are waiting to be given the roles they deserve. The studios which failed to make good pictures with such excellent and tried material—how can they turn out masterpieces with raw (however promising) material like the Jyotis, Anuradhas, Khurshids, Aruns, Trilok Kapurs, Hansas, Shaikhs, Pramillas and Romillas?

Before they start on this new career of 'star-manufacture' the producers owe it to their old stars to give them the best technique, direction and publicity which they deserve.

No one objects to newer faces being seen in films. But they cannot be substitutes for established stars. Give them a chance by all means, try them out in smaller roles, and in smaller pictures, promote them if they deserve it, but (in your own interests) don't let them suffer from the illusions that without any experience or training they are as good as the other ones. The recent policy of certain studios of featuring this younger element in elaborate and expensive pictures is a dangerous gamble—it is neither Business nor Art.

ARE STAR SALARIES TOO HIGH?

It is sometimes said that stars get too high salaries and, therefore, the producers are justified in replacing them with youngsters who will accept much less. Those who put forward this argument lose sight of two facts. The salaries that our stars get are not so fabulous after all. Those who are getting more than a thousand rupees a month can be counted upon the fingers of one hand. Then we have to consider that the span of a star's career is after all very limited. At most he or she can expect to be in public favour for eight or ten years. After that what is he or she to do? A few lucky ones may continue longer in character roles or get a chance to direct pictures. The others, however, will be veritably thrown on the streets, forced to live on whatever little they have managed to save during their screen career. Under the present conditions, the State (or the producer!) makes no provision for accident insurance, pension, allowance or alternative employment. Why shouldn't the star, then, legitimately claim a decent wage while he or she is still in demand?

PITY THE POOR FILM STAR

I wonder if it is realized that the lot of a film star is not exactly enviable. Hard work, irregular hours, no holidays, the glare of the blinding studio lights (not a few stars are forced to use glasses in private life owing to failing eyesight!), the psychological and emotional strain of constant make-believe, uncertainty of employment, "bossy" attitude of producers and sometimes discourteous treatment at the hands of directors,—these are some of the factors which soon disillusion an aspirant to film fame. The glamour is patently absent from studio work—at best it is honest, hard labour, at worst it is monotony and drudgery. And yet they continue to work for they, like all sensitive artistes, seek a congenial vehicle of expression. So many of our educated actors could have adopted other and perhaps more lucrative careers, and quite a few of our leading ladies could have led a happy married life instead of working 10 hours a day in stuffy studios! They adopted this career because they felt that irresistible urge which artists feel for self-expression. Many of them incurred the odium of society, the censure of their families and the wrath of their parents to join this line. After all these sacrifices, are they to be thrown on the scrap heap? To them, in a large measure, is due the re-orientation of the film industry in India, the raising of the cultural level of the studios. In return they deserve a square deal—as artistes and as employees.

STARS AT COOLIES' WAGES!

These remarks apply with equal force to the younger 'recruits' in the studios. I admire their courage and enthusiasm in taking up this much-maligned career. Some of them have real talent (e.g., Shanta Hublikar, Minakshee, Sheikh, Khurshid, Rama Shukul, etc.) and deserve speedy promotion ultimately culminating in stardom. But I certainly do not think that simply because they have some histrionic ability they can at once replace the old brigade in toto. I also believe that they are being 'exploited' by the producers for their own capitalist ends. There are newspapers which are run on the youthful enthusiasm of unpaid apprentices, allowing the proprietors a large margin of profit. Similarly certain producers want to save money by engaging raw youths for stellar honours. (I know of a talented youth who was brought to be 'starred' in a picture —and he made a hit, too—at Rs. 50 per month! The pay of a camera cooly!!) But the producers shall not succeed in this policy, for the cinema, under present conditions, subsists on the personal drawing power of the stars' personalities. When, by dint of consistent good work, they have proved their merit I want these youngsters, too, to get large salaries—even bigger, if possible, than the stars of today receive. Even at their "apprenticeship" stage, they should demand and get a reasonable wage on a rising scale in conformity with their increasing box-office appeal. If and when, the Cine Artistes Association decides to raise the question of decent wages for all artistes I am sure every conscientious journalist will support them.

NEW DEAL FOR THE STARS

To sum up, the Indian stars, to be able to give their best for the

progress of the film industry in this country, deserve

(1) Good salaries, in proportion with the big profits made (and fat 'allowances' drawn) by the producers—financiers, and reasonable security of employment, sickness and accident insurance,

(2) Better working conditions, reasonable hours of work, holidays, and courteous treatment,

(3) Better stories and proper casting, and

(4) Competent direction and better make-up and technique without which even the best artistes cannot make a mark on the screen.

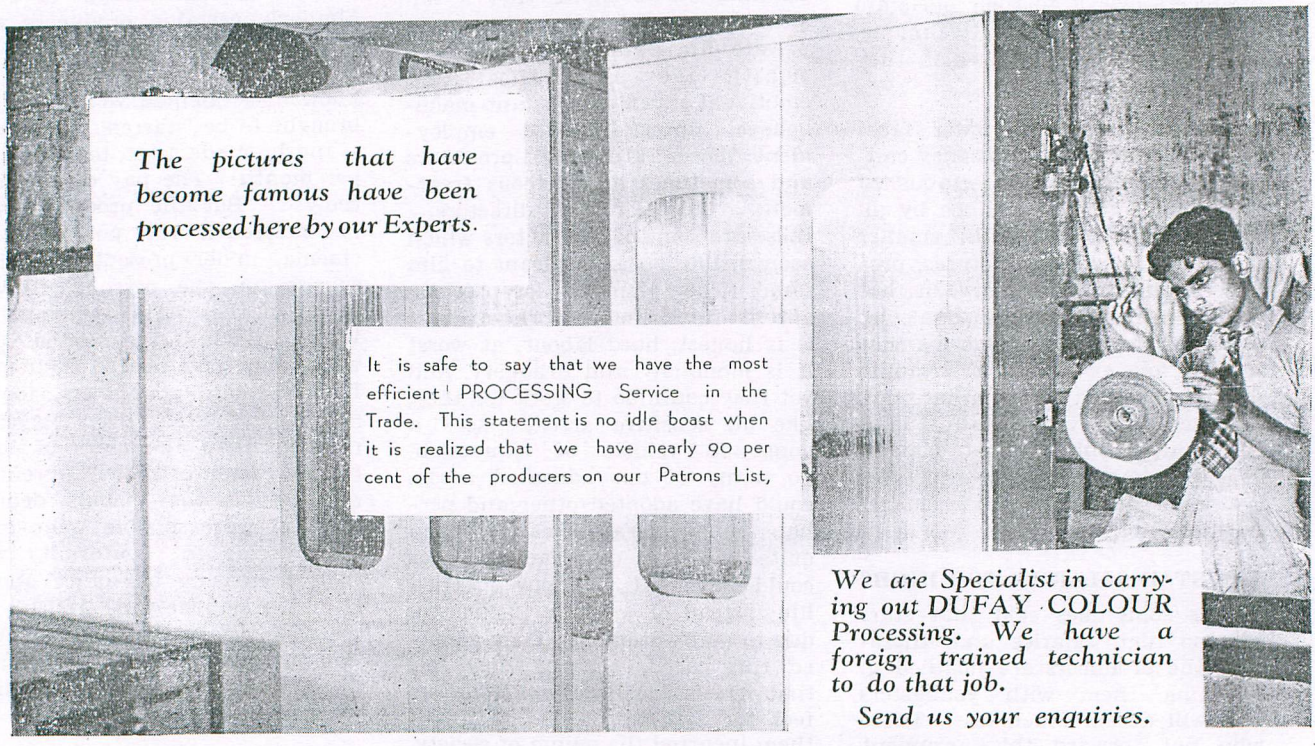
Thus alone can we attract the best talent in the country and bring our stars on a level with the screen celebrities of Hollywood and Europe.

It seems strange that I should be writing an article presumably in defence of the star system while, as a socialist, I visualize a time when the profit-motive would be taken out of the screen and films will be made for the entertainment and instruction of the masses and not for a few financiers to make money. Then there would be no 'stars' but all artistes, but their decent living will be assured by the State. There would be no producers rolling along in sleek limousines and no 'extra' will have to walk from Girgaum to Dadar to earn 12 annas after a hard day's work!

Hats off to Leela Chitnis for her portrayal of Ratna in Sant Tulsidas

Meanwhile, I don't see any reason why the studio proprietors should not be persuaded (if necessary forced) to share their profits with the men and women whose hard work brings in the cash.

NEW STARS OR OLD—Give them a square deal, producers!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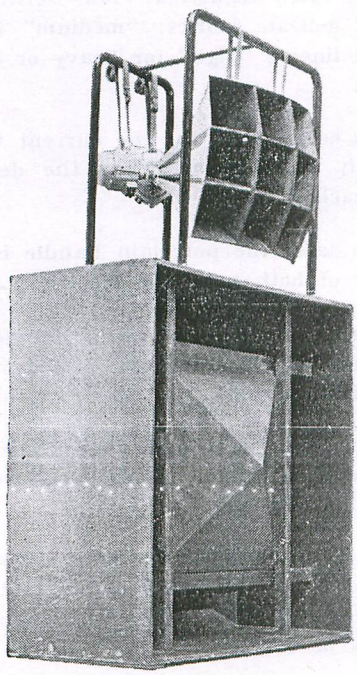

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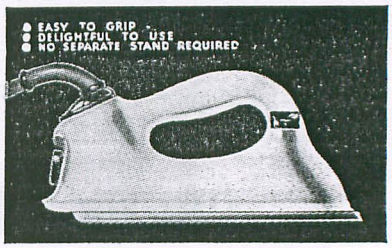

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Round the Town

SANT TULSIDAS (Marathi)

Produced by—Shree Ranjit Movietone—Story: Anant Shukla - Direction: Jayant Desai - Dialogues: Shivram Vashikar - Music Direction: Vishnupant Pagnis and Jnan Dutt - Photography: Krishna Gopal - Audiography: P. C. Subedar - Cast: Vishnupant Pagnis, Leela Chitnis, Vasanti, Keshavrao Datey, Ram Marathe, Ram Apte, Dixit, Bandopant Sohoni, Sushila, etc., - Released at: Royal Opera House - Date of Release: 24th June 1939.

This is undoubtedly the greatest picture ever produced by the Ranjit Movietone and Sardar Chandulal Shah deserves congratulations on having successfully undertaken such a stupendous epic as the life of India's first national poet. It is evident that he spared neither money nor effort to make this a truely magnificient spectacle and the cast provides an impressive line-up of popular stars. Planned and produced on a lavish scale, calculated to appeal more to the religious-minded, superstitious masses rather than the few intellectuals, it scores a bulls'-eye on the box-office target. The Marathi version has immediately caught the fancy of Bombayites and the Hindi version will naturally have a much larger all-India appeal. As Tulsidas wrote in the language which has become the **lingua-franca of India**, the Hindi version would indeed be the more appropriate of the two.

Jayant Desai Directed Tulsidas

The Story: Go wherever you like throughout the length and breadth of this Hindustan of ours and you will find the sons and daughters—of the soil singing devotional hymns from Valmiki's epic "Ramayana." But they would not have been able to sing these hymns had it not been for the genius of Tulsidas who incurred the odium of orthodoxy by translating the Sanskrit text into the language of the common people. It was an occasion comparable with John Wycliffe's rendering of the Bible into English or the translation of Illiad by which opened the treasures of Greek literature to the English-knowing world. It is around the life of this literary genius, this inspired poet, this devotee of Ram, that Ranjit have built their photoplay which, quite rightly, does not claim to tell

Krishna Gopal photographed Tulsidas

the authentic story of Tulsidas. The Divine Will plays an important part in the development of the theme, avatars and Mythological figures often appear on the screen and Tulsidas emerges more as a Sant, a Ram Bhakt, than as a Kavi or the worshipper of the Muse.

The story opens with Narhari Shashtri roaming the country-side in search of Tulsidas who, it has been revealed in an inspired dream, is the person who would translate Ramayana into Hindi. At last he meets the boy Tulsidas whom he recognizes by intuition and takes him home. The boy grows into manhood and with manhood inevitably came the urge of youthful romance. Her name is Ratna. Oblivious to the expectations of the Shashtri, Tulsidas succumbs to the temptations of love and marries Ratna. This almost breaks the heart of old Narhari who wanted the youth to devote all his life to the lofty mission for which he is destined. The Shastri appeals to Ratna and her sensitive feminine heart is won over to the idea of separation so that her husband can pay undivided attention to the work of translation. In one of the most significant sequences in the film she impresses upon him the transience of human charms—"what am I in the ultimate analysis but a mere skeleton of bones?"—and convinces him that he must leave her. (It is not clear whether for the whole life or for the time that the translation is being done!) After a period of penance and wandering he starts on his mission and translates the epic which is echoed from village to village. The later sequences relate the machinations of one Bateshwar Shastri who seems to be incurably hostile to Tulsidas. His own children, however, are Ram bhakts and followers of Tulsidas and thus give a good twist to the story, incidentally giving a superb opportunity to that versatile little artiste, Vasantee. Tulsidas, by the grace of God, and with the help of Hanuman, revives the dead, cures the afflicted and generally does all that a saint is supposed to do. Meanwhile he sings some fine devotional hymns which are an essential part of story and the most popular feature of the story. The sterling virtue in Tulsidas triumphs in the end, even the hitherto villainous Bateshwar Shastri is converted and the poet as well as his wife are made one with the infinite.

P. C. Subedar audiographed Tulsidas

Production: Lavish and spectacular are the words which automatically spring to one's lips while describing "Sant Tulsidas." Never before has Ranjit accomplished—or even tried—on such a grand scale. The direction by Jayant Desai is competent, sometimes almost brilliant. The real marvel, however, is the technique which has suddenly risen to the standard of the better New Theatres or Bombay Talkies production. Krishna Gopal uses his lights and cameras with powerful effect and achieves superb pictorial effects. Subedar's sound-recording also hits a new height. Technically this picture is a revealation and establishes a new reputation for Ranjit.

Acting: For sheer histrionic performance, Leela Chitnis (as Ratna) is hard to beat but her role is comparatively small and the picture is, therefore, stolen by Vasantee who plays and sings her way straight to the hearts of the audience. Keshavrao Datey is excellent as the uncompromising Bateshwar and appropriately grim and vengeful. As for Pagnis—well, he sings those devotional songs beautifully! No one ever 'accused' him of being a great emotional actor!! Others are adequate.

Points of Appeal: The name "Tulsidas" is enough to fill houses. Add to it the reputation of Pagnis ("Tukaram"), Vasantee ('Dharmatma' and 'Unexpected'), Datey ('Unexpected') and the histrionic talent of Leela Chitnis. Also add to all these a superb technique and an elaborate and lavish production. No wonder "Sant Tulsidas"—especially the Hindi version—promises to be a small gold mine for Ranjit.

"SNAKE CHARMER" (Sapera)

Producers: New Theatres - Story: Kazi Nazrul Islam - Dialogues: Kidar Sharma - Direction: Devaki Bose - Photography: Yusuf Mulji - Audiography: Atul Chatterji - Music: R. C. Boral - Cast: Nawab, Kananbala, Pahari Sanyal, Prithviraj, Menaka, K. C. Dey, etc. Released: Krishna Theatre - Date of Release: 1st July 1939.

Technically poor but otherwise as fine a production as Devaki Bose's previous hit—Vidyapati—this is the verdict after seeing "Snake Charmer" (Sapera) from the gilded splendour of the past and the rosy visions of a poet's fancy to the rugged realism of the life of a snake-charmer is a far cry but Devaki Bose is to be congratulated on acquitting himself creditably in a new type of picture though many expected it to be another of those flops which he is quite capable of periodically producing.

The Story: Snake charmer or 'sapera' are a picturesque and common feature of Indian life. (According to many Americans this country is principally inherit-

Indu Rani in Mohan Pictures Swastika directed by Mohan Sinha.

ed by Maharajas, fakirs, and snake-charmers!) It is strange, therefore, that no one had thought of producing a film about them, their peculiar mode of life, their loves and their jealousies, their hopes and their despairs. From this seemingly weird and unromantic material Kazi Nazrul Islam has woven out a story which while providing an interesting background of documentary significance, presents a drama rich in emotional highlights.

Jahar, the Sardar of a clan of snake-charmers, is a stern Brahmachari, a devotee of the goddess Mausa, who holds the record of having got himself bitten by no less than 90 poisonous snakes and assimilated their venom in his system. One more bite and he will be permanently immune from snake poisoning, free to cure any one suffering from snake-bite. But his mantras have no effect in the presence of women—symbolizing the dangers of sensual temptations distracting us from our ideals!

The Sardar has a secret. Her name is Chandan, a girl he had cured of a snake-bite in her childhood. Since then he has brought her up disguised as a boy, giving her increasing doses of arsenic to deaden her feminine instinct. So successful is Chandan's disguise that Moutoushi, a girl of the tribe, falls in love with (what she regarded) as the handsome boy. Chandan, however, muses a secret passion for Jhumru to whom ultimately her real identity is revealed. Jealousy and revolt raise their heads within the tribe, the Sardar's celebacy is suspected and he has to give an assurance that he has no love for her. The smouldering fire, however, bursts into flames when he learns that Chandan is running away with Jhumru and in a fit of blind rage he sends his pet kala nag to bite Jhumru. The young man lies dying but Chandan comes running back to Jahar and pleads for her lover's life. She even promises to live with the Sardar if only he would cure Jhumru. In a moment of intense melodrama, the Sardar goes and cures Jhumru. Then, letting the loving pair go, he deliberately allows the nag to bite him. Life has no meaning for him now and the man who had successfully assimilated the venom of ninety-nine snakes dies of a more fatal poison of love.

Production: Devaki Bose and Kazi Nazrul Islam both deserved better technical assistance than they get in this picture. It is difficult to believe that the same Yusuf Mulji has handled the camera in 'Sapera'

who produced that pictorial masterpiece "'Vidyapati". Sound-recording is positively bad, some of the songs suffering on this account. Settings are authentic, giving the picture almost a documentary significance.

Dialogues are excellent. Music. by Boral, is undistinguished.

Performances: Nawab is easily the best in a role that ideally suited him. Those who believed he could do only comedy must have been pleasantly surprised to see him requitting himself so well in a serious character role. After this, I hope he will not be put in every picture in stop-gep roles and that special stories will be writte to exploit his histrionic talent.

Kananbala puts over the finest performance of her life and puts into the role of Chandan all her impish charm and naive vivacity.

Pahari Sanyal fails to impress, especially after his histrionic triumph in 'Bari Didi.'

Prithviraj is generally good though on occasions over-emphasis brings out those mannerisms of his. In any case, he deserves better and more important roles. His good looks should not be hidden behind those ferocious moustaches!

K. C. Dey, is an infliction and does not even sing to justify his presence in the picture. The antics of the alleged Merry Gang are far from amusing and the opinion is confirmed that Devaki Bose can't direct comedy situations.

Points of Appeal: A good story, the name of Devaki Bose, Superb performances by Nawab and Kanan and the novelty of the subject combine to make it a good box-office draw, faulty technique not withstanding.

"MY EYES" (Meri Ankhen)

Producers: The Supreme Pictures - Story: Dwarka Khosla - Dialogues: Pt. Fani & Santoshi - Direction: Dwarka Khosla - Photography: G. G. Gogate - Audiography: Thakorbhai Patel & C. K. Trivedi - Music: Khemchand Prakash - Cast: Khurshid, Mazhar, Ishwarlal, Sitara, Suresh, Bhagwandas, Keshri, etc., Released at West End Cinema - Date of Release: 15th July 1939.

Supreme Pictures make a debut with this maidan effort. After a long experience of distribution and exhibition they have now launched into production and "MY EYES" is their first presentation. While welcoming them in this new role we hope they would strive to produce pictures not only of box-office appeal but also of artistic excellence.

The Story: "My Eyes," essentially a good though familiar theme,

Vina Kumari in Mohan Pictures Swastika, directed by Mohan Sinha

concerns itself with the romance between an ugly man and a blind beggar girl. The ugly man is intensely conscious of his frightful looks and draws consolation from the fact that at least one girl does not know how ugly he is. Indeed, by a cleverly worked incident, the blind girl is led to believe that he is a handsome fellow. They fall in love, the blind girl sings some songs, the ugly man dreams about her and buys quantities of fine presents for her. The ugly man who is also a bad man and keeps a bar is so transformed by the good influence of the blind girl that he turns his establishment into a Milk Bar—thus making virtue out of necessity as from first of August he would have had to close it in any case! (Any way, it is a good start to Prohibition Propaganda and has a certain topical interest). In the end, the ugly man realizes in excitingly dramatic circumstances that he can't keep his bad looks a secret for ever even from a blind girl (who has a most annoying habit of pawing a man's face!) and commits suicide.

It is thus an interesting, unpretentious story with sufficient intrinsic appeal for the audiences. But for some unaccountable reason it is interwoven with an irrelevant feud between two rival gangsters who keep on changing their clothes and firing thousands of revolver shots at each other without so much as even wounding any one). The crime film motif raises its ugly head here also and it is hardly a consolation that one of the tough guys (the ugly one) gives all his loot to charitable institutions and the other one is loved by a pretty exotic girl in glamorous clothes who spends her time between playing "Patience" and dancing in the garden!

Production: Produced at the Ranjit Studio, the picture is marked by a generally good level of technique. Direction, not exactly perfect, is yet enterprising in some respects. If he had not allowed the gangster business to creep in, Dwarka Khosla may have achieved a creditable psychological film.

Performances: Mazhar Khan does some good work as the ugly man with a soft heart. He is a good character actor, with a penchant for make-up, which has been taken advantage of in this picture. Khurshid for whom the

year 1938-39 has been exceptionally lucky gets another fine role which she deserved after her good work in "Sitara." She made a very attractive blind girl and sang moderately well, but somehow she was too light-hearted which was not in strict conformity with the pathetic role she was supposed to play. Sitara who is a competent actress especially in vampish roles was rather wasted on a character that was only subsidiary. Ishwarlal who showed in "Thokar" that he can act sympathetic roles very well has been cast again as a gangster. He deserves better treatment. Trilok Kapur, in a minor role, looks smart and holds forth promise of better work in future.

Points of Appeal: The basic story of the blind girl's love for an ugly man will be liked by the discriminating cine-goers while the "stunt thriller" part may appeal to others who prefer this type of film fare. On the whole, there is plenty of entertainment.

"SADHANA"

Producers: Sagar Movietone - Story: Shayda - Scenario and Screen adaptation: Virendra C. Desai - Dialogues and Songs: Kanailal Caturvedi - Music: Anupam Ghatak - Direction: Virendra C. Desai and Mahendra Thakore - Cast: Shobhana Samarth, Prem Adib, Harish, Kanailal, Bibbo, etc.

This is a B class picture from Sagar and seems to have been rushed through as a sort of stop-gap between the production of their more ambitious programmes. It has some merit, however, owing to its simple story and unpretentious treatment.

The Story: The familiar theme of "Boy Loves Girl But Parents and Society Object," so successfully exploited in film like 'Devdas' and "Achhut Kanya" has once again been revived. But the author has given a fresh twist to the story which has an interesting rural background.

Yogesh, an educated village youth, loves Sadhana, a neighbour's daughter who reciprocates his emotions with a warmth and ardour somewhat alien to the nature of a simple peasant girl. Yogesh's mother who knows and approves of this romance dies without making Sadhana her daughter-in-law. (Why should some one die in the beginning of practically every Indian film?) Yogesh is left under the guardianship of his maternal grand-father, Ganesh Kaka, who is a sort of grand-old-man of the village. Vowing undying love for Sadhana, Yogesh leaves for the city to rejoin his college. No sooner does he leaves than Ganesh Kaka, not knowing of his grand-son's romance, arranges Sadhana's marriage to another local youth, Ramesh. Yogesh comes to know of this when it is too late. Sadhana wants to revolt but Yogesh, like a typical spineless Devdas, talks philosophy to her and prefers to sacrifice his love for the sake of the old man's 'honour.' Even rebellious Sadhana is persuaded by Yogesh to be 'married alive' to Ramesh. It all looks like ending in a tragedy but in the end Ramesh, goaded by a sister whose purpose hitherto was only to sing a number of songs, develops a conscience and in a melodramatic climax renounces his claims in favour of Yogesh who is married to Sadhana.

Performances: Kanailal as Ganesh Kaka provides a fairly authentic characterization. Shobhana Samarth in the title role is good but not brilliant and better-dressed and more well-groomed than an average villager is expected to be. Prem Adib is promising—but he has been promising for a long time. It is time he was given an opportunity to vindicate the 'promise' by a really impressive performance. Bibbo walked into the picture to inflict upon the audince a few rather tame songs and provide a confidant and companion to the heroine.

Production: There is nothing very remarkable about it except photography which is good and does justice to the rural out-door scenes. The direction is rather ameteurish which is not surprising as Messrs. Virendra Desai and Thakore have yet to learn much. There is nothing particularly attractive about the songs.

Points of Appeal: The story, at places, has a sentimental ring which will appeal to many people. The picture suffers from lack of star value though Shobhana Samarth helps to brighten it up considerably.

Mr. K. S. Hirlekar, second from right, India's delegate to the 5th International Amateur Film Congress in Zurich is seen conversing with Swiss girls in National Costumes when the Delegates were taken on an excursion to the birth place of Swiss Republic founded in 1291. (See Notes and News on page 21)

Shots from Minerva's 'Pukar' starring Sohrab Modi, Naseem, Chandra Mohan, Sheela, and Sadiqali.

★ Shots from Sagar's "Comrades" directed by Nand Lal.

DEVOTED TO OUR TECHNICIANS

This page has been placed at the disposal of the Association of Cine Technicians of India and will be controlled and conducted by them to further the aims and objects of the Association.

The Editor.

Cinematographers & Audiographers

not Cameramen and Sound Recordists.
Editor of A. C. T. I. Bulletin.

The first lesson that a new Director learns in this country is that he and he alone is responsible for the film, a producer has gambled to entrust him with. In his arrogance, or possibly in a further attempt to impress this unfortunate being, he begins to treat the team of technicians allotted to him with complete indifference and takes the first opportunity of reporting a lack of co-operative spirit when they refuse to take or attempt a fantastic shot. That particular shot immediately becomes one on which the sole success of the film depends, and care is taken that a record is made of this. Then when the film is released and as it invariably fails, attention is drawn to these glorious blunders of the technicians and the entire blame thrust upon them. His most romantic scenes, he says, when there should have been but a shimmer of moonlight, are taken as if there was a June midday sun shining overhead. And the last scene, his masterpiece, on which he had spent day and nights of thinking, and over which his heroine, poor gentle creature, had actually shed her own agonised tears-wasted, all wasted, for you cannot even hear her sobs on the screen. And if you can't hear them, how on earth can the audience believe she is really crying, after all it is a modern audience and it knows that mere tears may just be glycerine.

But herein lies the crux of the problem—if even our poor deluded Directors such as these we have described, believe, that the lighting or the suggestiveness of sound beyond that of just a simple reproduction, has a definite bearing in the final telling and the understanding of the story, our case has been won. They have inadvertantly pleaded our cause in trying to shield themselves.

We do not, of course, claim that technique alone can ever be responsible for the success (or failure as a matter of fact) of any production but we do claim that a sympathetic photographic treatment can be of immense help to the Director in the building up of his drama. And what is true of the visual treatment holds good for the aural. Can one ever imagine the antics of Charlie under a lighting peculiar to the machinations of a Boris Karloff or the soft and tender heartburnings of a Jamuna under the brillance of the vivacious Azurie. One does not always die in the darkness of the night but we always associate the visit of the god of Death with something dark and sinister.

"But we always tell you," say these very Directors "when it is night or it is day."

But we contend that even if we are told this, it is not enough. A scenario in India has still to be written that takes into consideration the carrying moods of the story with the time or the place of action. If the cinematographer knows nothing of the scene itself and of its relation to the others beyond the fact that the time of action is night, he is unable to give it that treatment which it is his privilege to give. Here we have the greatest fallacy—Lighting concerns itself with neither day or night, its aim is to give, irrespective of the time of the day or night, a visual representation of the particular dramatic mood of the story at the time—and as it changes even in a single scene, so must lighting change to correspond with it. If you will permit me, I will give you the analogy of the musical accompaniment and the singer. What the one is to the other, lighting is to the moods of the story.

I will give another illustration. Two incidents differing remotely in their dramatic values may be enacted on the same dark and lonely road at the same time, but their treatment from the point of view of the technician must be different. If we have a murderer out on his dark and nefarious errand on his way to the house of his victim, we will endeavour to depict on that road at night the deep and lengthy shadows of the trees—dark and dismal as his errand, perhaps the screeching of a night owl may break the stillness of the night as he wends his way. But if we have a lover on his way to keep a tryst with his beloved, we will picture the scene with the effect of a mellow moonlight, perhaps the moon itself hidden behind an overwhelming creeper, and instead of the night owl he may himself be humming along a tune of love.

And so far a scene enacted in broad daylight. If there is sunlight in a room there are shadows as well to create our moods with, shadows that can fall always at the right or wrong place—to suit the story and to help the Director in the telling of his story. But that help must be demanded in a spirit of friendly co-operation. Let him trust us as his colleagues, let him lay before us his problems before he begins his story, and together let us seek out a remedy.

But as I have said before, a Director's first lesson is otherwise. He will write his story or "adapt" it from the American film running at the time or which he happens to remember, make some semb-

lance of a script—usually a collection of dialogues and a few phrases, as "enters" or "goes way" and with this, he enters his first set enquiring as to what technicians have been allotted to him. He will then probably tell then his first shot, that so and so enters from this place, meets so and so here talks a little, (what he talks does not matter) and goes away, and adds, as a reminder "Don't forget, it's a night scene,"—sometimes he will forget even this as well, expecting the poor technician to conclude from the presence of a hurricane lantern of the set that it is night. And so the shooting commences, a series of scenes are taken from all over the story and work for the day concludes. This goes on for the rest of the shooting days for the picture, and finally it is finished, and released, which you of the public then criticise, that the photographer has been unable to give justice to the story or that he lacks a knowledge of the balance of light or that the sound engineer has no sense of dialogue and that his songs lack spirit. We ask you gentlemen under the circumstances to forgive us our shortcomings.

Sometimes a technician does ask in desperation, "Give me a copy of the script," but little does he know that such a thing is indeed a rarity and for him to get one it is first necessary for one to exist. But at any rate the Director has a rough idea of what he is going to do—we but ask him to share that confidence with us and let us help him if we can. At the best his picture can be no worse than what it usually is, and there is certainly a possibility that some good may come of it.

We have made no boast—for the past twenty-five years we have shown and you have acknowledged a gradual but steady improvement in the technical development which we have achieved, what we feel and what we admit with shame, is, that there has been little or no development in that other, the artistic phase of our work.

But this can only be when Directors realize that in us they have not merely a collection of mechanical or electrical aids, but a team of creative colleagues who can with their artistry help him in his endeavour to tell his story and to convey his moods to the audience, it is his duty to please.

Not cameramen and sound recordist then, but Cinematographers and Audiographers, if you please.

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38 A

ILA DEVI— (*Courtesy Ranjit*)

As she appears in Wadia Movietone's forthcoming picture Kahan-Hai-Manzil-Teri? directed by Mr. S. M. Yousuf

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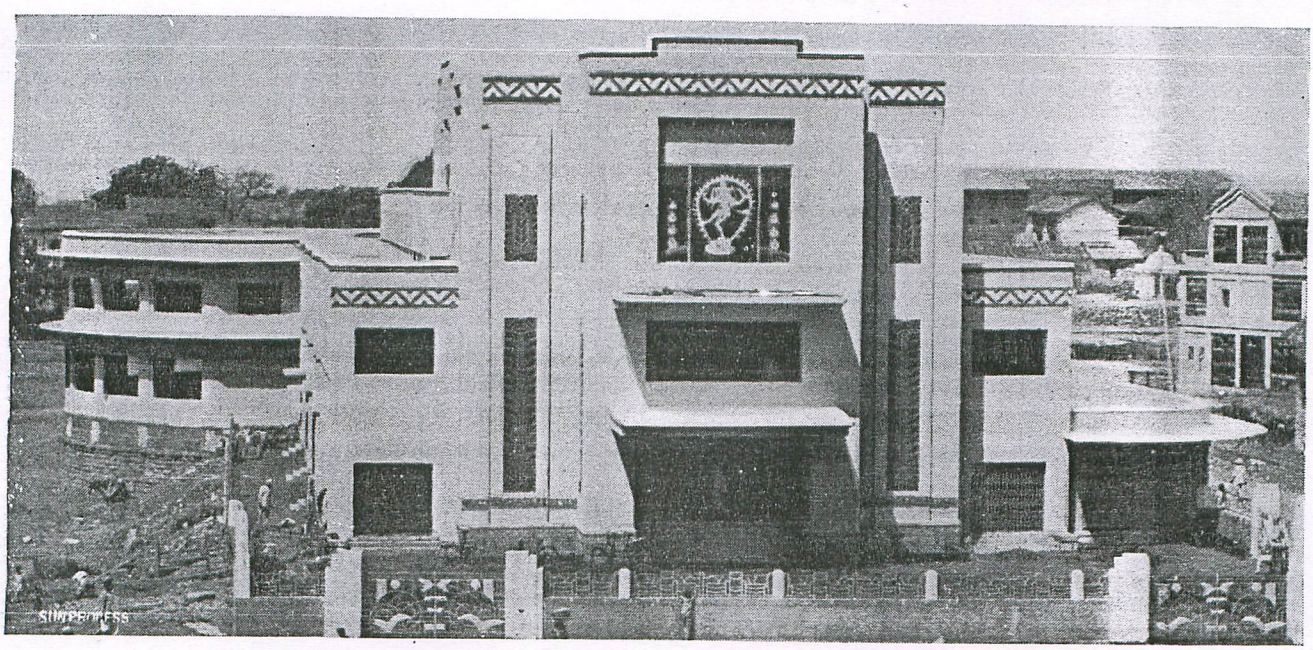

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USE "CONRADTY" THE MONARCH OF ALL CINE-CARBONS

"Well! What next? Defeatism, however, is outside the sphere of my philosophy." THAT is Ram Marathey in Shantaram's "Life's for Living," a Prabhat Picture.

"Yes, yes, salute the Bobby, least he searches you." SHANTA HUBLIKAR believes in safety first and gives the first salute to the Policeman and for a minute "Law & Order" stops and winks.

Our Hollywood Correspondent Asks :

Will Britain Ban This Film ?

Louis Bromfield's "THE RAINS CAME", A Sympathetic Picture of India

By RAM BAGAI HOLLYWOOD (By Air Mail.)

This last week saw the winding up of the filming of another Indian film, "The Rains Came". All that is now left is the scoring of the music and the editing of hundreds of thousands of feet of footage of storms, rains, floods and earthquake, drama and suspense. By mid-August, the film should be ready for its initial preview. Till then, however, I refuse to give my impressions of the film, good or bad—from the Indian viewpoint or from the dramatic side.

AN INDIAN DINNER

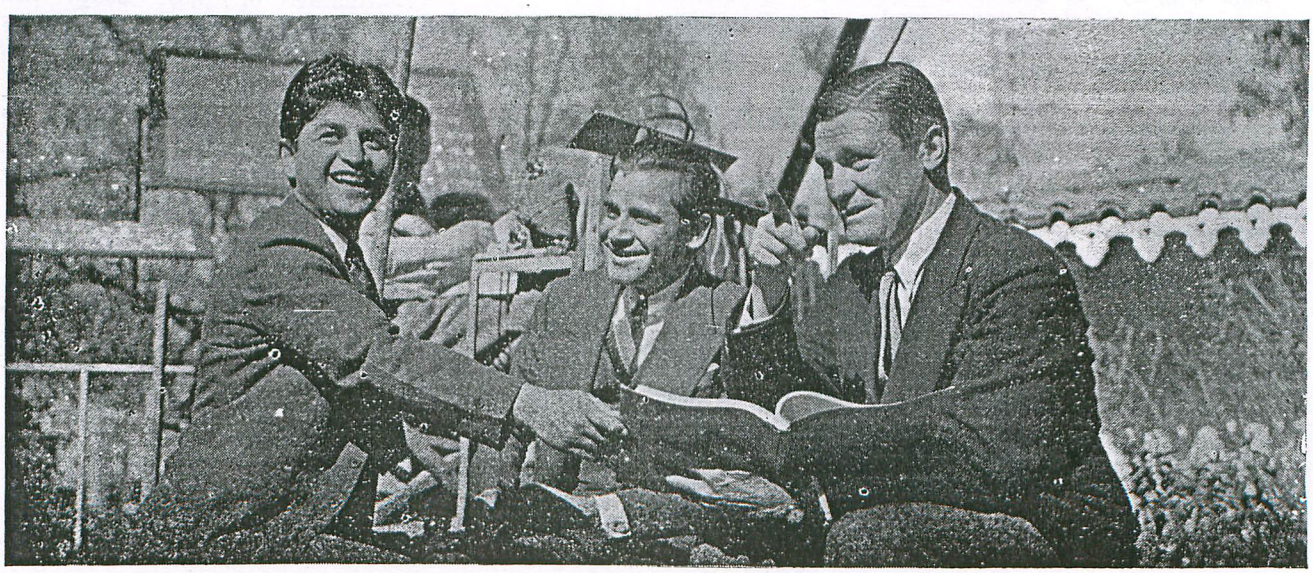
I have been on the 'sets' a number of times and have seen certain occurrences in the direction and the portrayal of parts by actors—and they were very well done indeed. I have noticed parts where India was well depicted and truthfully so. However—**I do not know what was done while I was not there,** too many things happen in the cutting rooms and in retakes for one to give an impression without having first seen the preview. But an occurrence that happened the other night foretell something about the contents of this film. Last week—a huge party was given, by that now popular young Indian technical advisor, Nazir Husain, to the cast and crew of "Rains". It was an Indian dinner held in a local restaurant—there we were fed with pakauras, prontas, delicious meats and vegetables all done in fine Hindustani style. It went over big with the entire group. Clarence Brown, the director, and George Brent, the star, of the film were immensely pleased with the event. But the added treat and surprise of the evening was the appearance of the author and writer of the story, which now, incidentally has become a best-seller. He stole the show—with his witty stories—and experiences.

HE BELIEVES IN INDIA

Later in the evening I collared the happy-go-lucky person, his name?—Oh yes! Louis Bromfield. Then on my questioning he broke down and told me how he happened to write the story. And how, after he had left India he had enough material for ten books. He likes India. He believes in India and I believe him! When he saw the sets that Fox had built for the film he was thunderstruck by the reality of the scenes. For an instant he imagined himself in India—it was so real. Later, looking at some of the rushes of the film—he was surprised to note that people around him—hardboiled studio executives were touched by some of the scenes. Fox believe they have a hit in this film. In fact this film is made to the detriment of the British. It seems that everyone is positive that this film will be well received in India—the point that scares them is: **WILL ENGLAND BAN THE FILM?** "The Film is definitely pro-India". With that remark I left Mr. Bromfield—and came away with my face glowing!

But we must not forget that these ideas and words are the author's which may not have been transmitted in the film. We must now more than ever await the first preview. However, I might add that for once it looks like India has got a break! I hope it isn't the last.

Incidentally Mr. Bromfield asked me to remember him to his friends —Abbas whom he knew when he was attending college at Aligarh and whom he met again in Paris, and Baburao Patel. To me he seems like a regular fellow, a friend of India!



Ram Bagai—our Hollywood Representative discusses technical aspects of "Rains Came" with technical adviser Nazir Husain and Major Remington.

Filmindia's Guide to Current & Forthcoming FOREIGN FILMS

WHAT — and WHAT NOT — To See

(This new department has been started to provide intelligent guidance to the Indian Cine-goers and save them from wasting their time and money on mediocrities which are seen by thousands of them simply because there is an erroneous general impression that every film which comes from abroad is good. A selected list of American, British and other foreign films will be reviewed in these columns every month by a well-known film critic.

—EDITOR, Filmindia.)

★★★ Go out of your way to see

CONFESSIONS OF A NAZI SPY

A First National Picture, Starring Edward G. Robinson and Francis Lederer, with George Sanders, Lya Lys, Paul Lucas, etc., directed by Anatole Litvak.

Hollywood takes sides at last —the side of democracy as opposed to Fascism! This is a downright, frank exposure of the recent espionage trials as recorded in the articles of Leon G. Turro. Here is the drama of reality, as topical as headlines in to-day's newspapers, which forces attention on vital, live issues like the menace of Nazi propaganda in other countries. In this film it is U.S.A. But it may as well be any other country. It may be India. No one who values freedom and realizes the danger of Hitler's ominous shadow shall miss this film.

But it is not dry, uninteresting propaganda though it candidly calls names and even produces arch Nazis on the screen. It would be worth seeing even as a clever, well-knit spy story, extremely well-acted (Robinson and Lederer share the honours) and produced with praiseworthy restraint and objectivity.

YOUNG DR. KILDARE

An M.G.M. picture, starring Lew Ayres and Lionel Barrymore, with Laraine Day and Lana Turner.

You will love Barrymore as a seemingly querulous, garrulous old Doctor who hides a heart of gold behind a forbidding, embittered exterior and is sufficiently great a medical genius to see through the taboos and totems of conventional medical practice. Lew Ayres, as the small town medical student who comes to a New York hospital encumbered with ideals and fights his way through, is another likeable and exemplary character. The film glorifies the proper medical ethics.

JANOSIK

A Czechoslovakian film, released in India by the China Aid Progressive Film Committee.

Melancholy interest attaches to this film which depicts the life of a revolutionary Slovakian peasant in the 17th century, and was produced to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Czechoslovakian republic. Powerfully dramatizing the revolt of an oppressed people against foreign tyrants, it has special appeal for a country like India. Technically, it is an excellent example of the celebrated Russian technique.

★★ Good for an Evening's Entertainment.

UNION PACIFIC.

Paramount film, directed by Cecil B. DeMille, Starring Barbara Stanwyck and Robert Preston.

Not so great a production perhaps as **Sign of the Cross** and **Cleopatra** but still it is by Cecil B. De Mille, the creator of Screen Spectacles. The building of the trans-continental railroad gives him an excuse for putting over another two-fisted melodrama with quantities of Red Indians thrown in. Technically excellent though not so outstanding as many expected. Vigorous entertainment.

MIDNIGHT

A Paramount film, starring Claudette Colbert, Don Ameche and John Barrymore.

Incredible but sparkling story of a Paris romance, brilliant dialogue and hilarious comedy situations. Claudette is excellent.

HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

Featuring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce.

The famous story of Conan Doyle filmed with fair measure of success. Interesting for Sherlock Holmes fans.

BROADWAY SERENADE

An M.G.M. Film, starring Jeanette Macdonald with Lew Ayres.

Another of those Broadway this and Broadway that films. Good enough musical, especially for Jeanette Macdonald fans. Watch this boy Lew Ayres. He is coming up.

★ Go Along If You Must

IDIOT'S DELIGHT (M.G.M.)

Spineless film based on an anti-war play. See it to realize how conventional Hollywood turns good stuff into hokum. Even Norma Shearer is not much good.

HONOLULU (M.G.M.)

Another of those South Sea films plus musical comedy, plus Eleanor Powell's tap-dancing legs.

THEY MADE ME A CRIMINAL

Tolerable among a plethora of American gangster films, notable for the acting of John Garfield.

OLD BUT GOOD

(See them if possible if you have missed them so far).

"You can't Take It With You."
"Four Daughters"
"Sisters"
"Dark Victory"
"Pygmalion"
"Citadel"

A Lady of Moods !

DEVIKA RANI

in

BOMBAY TALKIES' "DURGA"

★ Shots from Ranjit's great epic 'Sant Tulsi-das" still drawing huge crowds at the Royal Opera House.

On The Front Against Anti-Indian Films:

"filmindia" Agitation Moves Three Continents

"Can we expect people to welcome productions that libel them?" asks the organ of the American National Board of Review

"National Board of Review Magazine," New York, writes editorially in the May issue:—

"Filmindia" comes to us from Bombay with more serious material in what is really the same vein. They are sick and tired of having India made the home of screen rascals and traitors, and cite quite a row of American and European productions which have capitalized on people's willingness to accept the Indian as a symbol for all that is bloodthirsty and uncivilized. They cite Wee Willie Winkie, Lives of a Bengal Lancer, Clive of India from the United States, The Tiger of Eschnapur from Germany, and Alexander Korda's unscrupulous Drums. They are fighting for the banning of Gunga Din at present, and would like to see other films of this kind refused admission. The Secretary of State for India is praised for having caused the British Board of Film Censors to ban the making of The Relief of Lucknow on the grounds of its being unlikely to further friendly relations between Great Britain and India. Filmindia sees this, of course, more as a need for imperial unity in these dangerous times than as a real change of heart.

Many of us in this country must have wondered how much longer the movies were going to make revenue out of Indian devilry. Even setting moral and ethical reasons aside and viewing the matter simply from business point-of-view, such productions seem foolish and short-sighted. India is probably the second largest potential movie-market in the world; can we expect its people to welcome productions that libel them? What is, perhaps, the most extraordinary thing of all is the fact that any company should attempt to show such films in India. How can they possibly be welcome in the supposed place of their original stories?

We gratefully acknowledge the numerous letters we have received from all parts of India, from South Africa, Japan and even remote parts of Europe and America supporting our agitation against anti-Indian films. It was our duty to start this campaign —it is the duty of every patriotic Indian and every fair-minded foreigner to support us.—Editor, Filmindia.

"GREAT WORK"

An Indian Student writes from London:—

"'Filmindia' has really done great work in getting **'Gunga Din'** banned in India. I must congratulate you. It is something very worthy of you."

ANTI-INDIAN PROPAGANDA ON THE SCREEN

The following are extracts from a letter in "ASIA", the famous American magazine:—

It is rather surprising that only the dark side of India is exhibited on the screen. The propaganda against India is carried so far on the screen that all the Yankees and Cockneys and the girls of New York and London slums are convinced that Indians are cut-throat natives, born degenerates and hooligans, who would have created a blood-bath in India at any moment but for the glorified British. They never know nor can they even conceive the "Snobbery, Jobbery and Robbery" of white men in the East.

NATIONAL SENTIMENTS MUST BE RESPECTED

The following are extracts from an article 'India in Western Films' by Mr. Bernard Fonseca in "ASIA" the famous American magazine:—

"But what India objects to most of all is the depiction of her people as cowards or treacherous persons. No nation enjoys a monopoly of cowardice or courage.

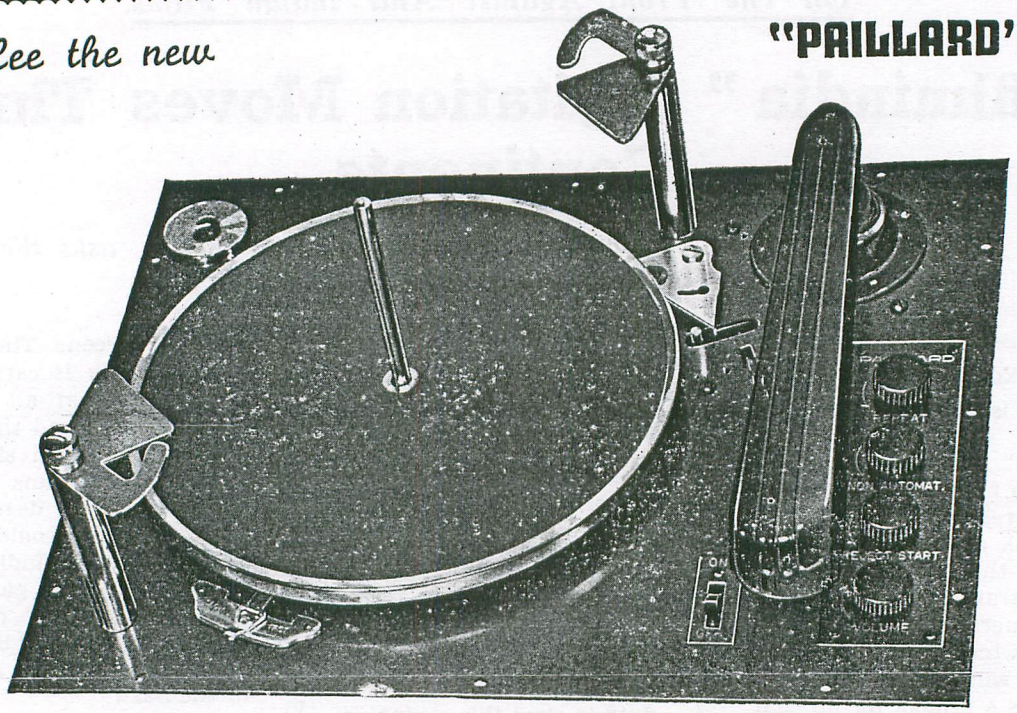
Hollywood and Elstree must realise that Indian national sentiments have to be respected just as much as those of Britain, the United States or any other country. In their desire to produce thrillers they need to guard against offending a growing Indian opinion and thus bringing their industry into disrepute in India."

AMERICAN GIRL SUPPORTS US

A Young Lady from Poughkeepsie (near New York) writes:—

"I am glad that 'Gunga Din' has been banned in India. I saw the picture and felt that it was among other things very unkind and unjust towards the Indian people."

See the new **"PAILLARD"**



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Produced at RANJIT STUDIOS with RANJIT PLAYERS—
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Studio Close-ups

RANJIT MOVIETONE:

"Sant Tulsidas" the great devotional epic has entered its sixth week at the Royal Opera House. It has achieved outstanding results far beyond the expectations of the Producers. The Hindi version, it is learnt will be released at thirty important stations of India this month.

In the studio Sardar Chandulal Shah is busy giving finishing touches to "Achhut" starring Gohar the Queen of Emotions in the lead.

Director A. R. Kardar has left aside his "Pagal" owing to the illness of Madhuri, and has taken another subject called "Holi."

Director Jayant Desai, who has the honour of directing the highest number of successful pictures for Ranjit is racking his brains to make his "Return of Toofan Mail" a worthy successor to "Toofan Mail," the picture that put Ranjit on the high water mark.

Director Chaturbhuj Doshi is finishing his "Unfinished Tale" starring Durga Khote, Rose, and Prithvi Raj.

Director Mani Bhai Vyas is busy taking a dance sequence of Sitara in his next vehicle "Good Luck," which stars Kumar, Ghory, Charlie. Sitara, etc.

BOMBAY TALKIES

The studio is elated at the success of "Durga" and the new production is being planned.

They have not yet announced the name of the next picture, but Himansu Rai, the back-bone of Bombay Talkies, has something different up his sleeve this time. Let us wait and see. The studio is producing an advertisement short in eight different languages. "Durga" is reported to have done excellent business at Paramount Talkies, Poona.

SAGAR MOVIETONE

"Sadhana", a social picture, is running at the Imperial.

Director Nandlal has finished his "Comrades" alias "Jiwan Sathi" featuring Surrendra, Maya, Anuradha, Harish, Bhudo Advani, etc., and has great hopes of his picture.

Director Madhu Bose is progressing with his "Kum Kum the Dancer" in Hindi and Bengali, featuring his own wife, Sadhona Bose, and Padma Devi, the Bulbul of Bengal. Dhiraj Bhattacharya and Robi Roy are also in the cast. All the outdoor scenes have been completed and he is now busy taking the indoors.

Director Ramchandra Thakore is finishing his "Civil Marriage" featuring Prabha, Harish, and Snehprabha Pradhan, well-known among Bombay student circles for her fine dancing and singing in the College Dramas.

"Poor Sweetheart" or "Bhole Bhale" is being shot by Zia Sarhadi at the Film City featuring Maya, Prem Adib, Arun, Bhudo Advani, and Bibbo. The picture is full of pep, they say.

Director Mehboob has ordered a gigantic set for his "Alibaba" featuring Surrendra, Ghulam Mahommed, Sardar Akhtar, etc., in two versions—Hindi and Punjabi—and is sparing no pains to make it a bigger box office hit than his recent "The Only Way." Well Mehboob, go ahead and open the seasame for Sagar.

SUPREME PICTURES:

Their maiden attempt "My Eyes" is running well at the West End Cinema and this has given them a new impetus and they will shortly be starting another picture tentatively titled "The Cyclone" which will be directed by Dwarka Khosla.

SUDAMA PRODUCTIONS:

"As You Please" is at last ready to please you, and will shortly be released at the Imperial Cinema. The picture is directed by Sarvottam Badami and features Motilal, Sabita Devi, Mazhar Khan, Khurshid, etc.

Director Badami will shortly start another social subject very soon.

MINERVA MOVIETONE:

"Pukar" the most ambitious production of Mr. Sohrab Mody is in the editing room and will be released very shortly at the local Minerva Talkies. Sohrab Mody, Naseem Banco, and Chandra Mohan are said to have done good work in the picture.

K. M. Multani has started his "Vasiyat" (Will) starring Sheela, Jagirdar and Sunalini Devi in the lead.

Jagirdar the actor-cum-director-cum-story-writer has progressed well with "Main Hari" with Naseem Banoo, Maya (of Bhabi fame) and Hari Shivdasani in the lead.

MOHAN PICTURES:

Director Mohan Sinha has completed his "Swastika" (nothing to do with "Nazi Spy") a social picture starring Indurani, Kumari Vina, Sushil Kumar, and Jivan in the lead. Mohan has spent lavishly on this picture and it will shortly be released at the local Krishna Talkies.

Director K. Amarnath's "Chashmavali"—a stunt thriller, has been passed by the Bombay Censors. The producers are contemplating to release it simultaneously at Bombay, Delhi and Allahabad.

Director A. M. Khan has completed "Black Heart."

PARAMOUNT FILM CO.:

Mr. Kikubhai Desai is handling "Amazon" and hopes to finish the picture by the end of this month. Director Nanubhai Vakil has completed his "Sansar Naiya."

POONA

PRABHAT FILM CO.:

Director Shantaram's "Life is For Living" is expected to be ready soon. He has put in his best efforts to make this picture an outstanding success. Shahu Modak and Mrs. Shanta Hublikar, have given outstanding performances. Preparations for "Dnyaneshwar" have been completed. Messrs. Damle and Fatehlal are sparing no pains to make this picture a huge success. Mr. Keshavrao Bhole is looking after the music of this picture.

SARASWATI CINETONE:

"Bhagwa Zenda" (now re-titled "Sant Ramdas), a Marathi historical has been sold to Messrs. Royal Film Circuit for a handsome price. The picture is running for the last six weeks at Poona.

The veteran Dadasaheb Torney has started another social picture called "My Beloved" starring Jayshree in the lead.

KOLHAPUR

HUNS PICTURES:

"In Search of Happiness" alias "Gulabi Phanda" is going to be a picture with distinction. Baburao Pendharkar, the inimitable villain of the Indian screen leads the cast, with Usha Devi, Mantri, Vimal Sardesai, Damuanna Malvankar, Jog and Salvi. The story comes from the pen of Mr. V. S. Khandekar and has a theme that will reach the heart and minds of all. The picture is being directed by P. V. Altekar and cinematographed by Mr. Pandurang Naik, one of the ace cameraman of India. Director Vinayak has taken up the story by Principal Atre called "Better-Half" (Ardhangi) and is busy with the script of the same.

CALCUTTA

NEW THEATRES LTD.:

Director P. C. Barua is working on the set of "Rajat Jayanti" (Bengali) and the picture will be completed very soon.

Director Phani Majumdar has completed his 'Kapal Kundala" (Hindi) a story from the pen of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and is magnificently presented on the screen. Lila Desai, Kamlesh Kumari, Jagdish and Najmul Hasan are in the cast. The picture will be distributed in Bombay by Messrs. Kapurchand Ltd.

Director Nitin Bose now presents "Jeeban Maran" which is the Bengali version of "Dushman." It features Saigal, the melodymaker and Lila Desai in the lead.

FILM CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD.

Kedar Sharma's "Dil Hi To Hai" has gone into the editing room. Kedar Sharma is busy on his next vehicle featuring Nandrekar of "Amar Jyoti" fame.

SHREE BHARAT LAKSHMI PICTURES:

Vithaldas Panchotia has completed his hillarious comedy "Takdeer Ki Tope" and will be soon on the screen. Director Profulla Roy is making steady progress with "Matwali Meera" in two versions, Hindi and Punjabi.

"Parasmani" (Bengali) is an interesting drama of love and supreme sacrifice and promising to be an outstanding picture of the season. It is being directed by Profulla Roy and the cast includes Durgadas Banerjee, Jyotsna Gupta, Ranibala, Tulsi Lahiri, Dhiraj Bhattacharya, etc.

RADHA FILM CO.

"Panduranga Vittale", a telugu mythological picture has been taken up for production in conjunction with B. V. Ramanandam. Talented Andhra artistes are reported to be in the cast.

SOUTH INDIA

VEL PICTURES LTD. (Madras)

"Bhaktha Pundalik" their Tamil mythological story is under production. The next one that will go into shooting is "Bhakthi", also in Tamil.

ASANDAS CLASSICAL TALKIES, (Madras)

Shooting of "Manimekhalai" a Tamil classical, is reported to have been completed at the Tollywood Studios, Calcutta. M I. Tandon was responsible for the direction of this and is expected to be quite a success. Miss K. B. Sundarambal is reported to have done well and some of her songs, as usual, are excellently rendered.

MOTION PICTURE PRODUCERS COMBINE (Madras)

An all comic picture under the direction of R. Prakash is being shot by the Surya Sound Pictures, and Miss Angamuthu is in the leading role.

"Arundhati" is yet another picture in Telugu that has gone into production at the above studios for Sri Ramakrishna Pictures of Bangalore. Miss Suryakumari, Miss Sushila Devi and others are in the cast in this mythological hit.

UNITED ARTISTES CORPORATION (Madras)

"Sakthi Maya" is now ready for release.

SARATHI FILMS LTD. (Madras)

"Rytu Bidda" is now scheduled for release during the course of this month.

THYAGARAJA FILMS LTD. (Trichinopoly)

"Tiruneelakanta Nayanar" is now ready for release.

CHAMARIA TALKIE DISTRIBUTORS (Madras)

"Vara Vikrayam" has been well received in the mofussil. It is expected to be released at the Broadway Talkies, Madras, in the first week of this month. The intelligent direction of C. Pullayya is responsible for the success of the picture.

VENUS PICTURES, (Karaikudi).

"Kiratha Arjuna" a Tamil Picture featuring M. R. Krishnamoorthy and Miss K. Subbalakshmi is awaiting release. Produced at the Andhra Cinetone Studios, Vizagapatam under the direction of G. Ramasesham, the picture ought to be a success.

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